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ALIENS OF CHARTED SPACE: VOLUME 4

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ALIENS OF CHARTED SPACE: VOLUME 4

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INTRODUCTION

Charted Space is home to hundreds of alien species of all shapes and sizes. The Major Races discovered jump technology and rose from their home worlds to form vast interstellar societies. Others found themselves surrounded by the polities of the Major Races and joined their societies. Yet more are new upon the galactic stage and have yet to make their presence felt to any significant degree.

When playing an alien species, it is tempting to focus on a couple of points which make them stand out from humans but this can result in all aliens seeming one-dimensional. The beauty of playing a member of an alien species is to dig down into what makes them different and how those differences affect their interactions with others.

This book covers four alien species.

The Suerrat are a gregarious human Minor Race who established a large interstellar republic using only sublight technology. They were discovered by the Vilani and forcibly absorbed into the Ziru Sirka, forced to leave their worlds with their culture almost eradicated to cow them into submission. A proudly independent species, the Suerrat remained recalcitrant subjects of the Ziru Sirka. When word reached them of the approach of a Terran war fleet, they overthrew their suppressors and allied themselves with the Terrans. Known for their advanced knowledge in biological and environmental sciences, the Suerrat became valuable members of the Third Imperium. However, they maintained their individualistic tendencies and frequently sued for greater independence. A Suerrat rebellion threatened to disrupt their area of space but they were no match for the vast fleets of the Imperium. Their uprising was quashed, and as punishment, the jungles of their homeworld were destroyed by the Imperial fleet to constantly remind them of the cost of insurgence.

The Za'tachk are members of the Hive Federation located to rimward and trailing of the Third Imperium. In many ways their psychology resembles the Hivers – both are pacifistic and cautious but that is where the similarities end. Za'tachk have a highly structured society based on their insect-like trisexual dimorphism. They are consummate bureaucrats who value, almost obsessively so, order and organisation. Za'tachk have become instrumental to the Hiver Federation, lending their bureaucratic expertise to running the vast polity.

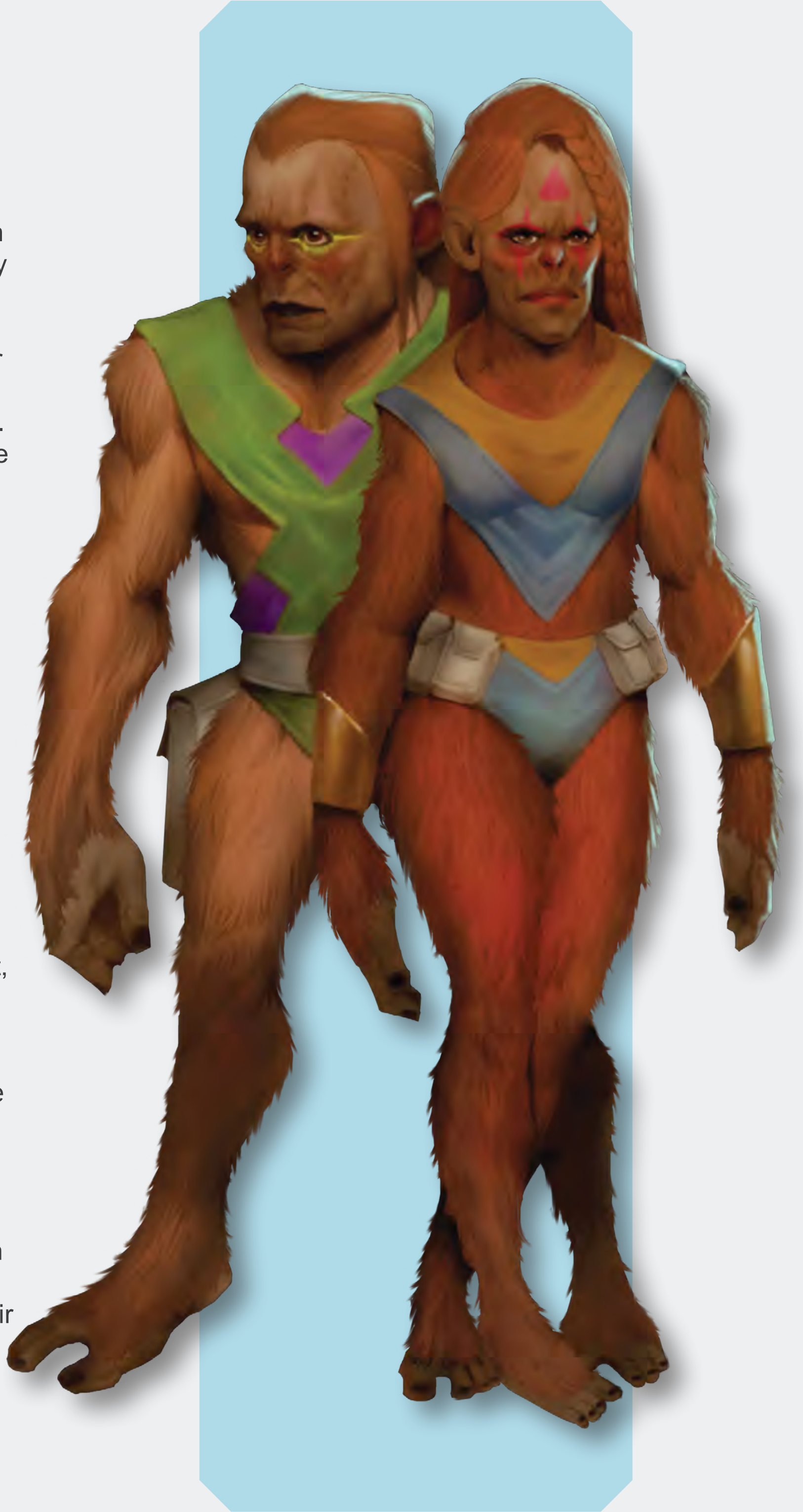
The Gurvin were the first sophonts the Hivers encountered in their space exploration. They are a strongly matriarchal species that have developed the art of commerce to a fine degree. The Gurvin are also noteworthy as having provided the Hive Federation with its official language, spoken on every world within its borders and many beyond. They are the primary businesspeople in the federation, driving commerce, trade and supporting the vast economy through their import and export companies. Shrewd and not above manipulating the market for their own interest, the best way to view the Gurvin is 'let the buyer beware'.

The Tezcat are relative newcomers to the galactic stage, being somewhat isolated in the Great Rift. They are a felinoid species known for their violence and xenophobia brought about by an early struggle for independence with another sophont species which evolved on their planet. Using only sublight craft, they successfully waged war with Droyne on a neighbouring world. Gaining jump technology from the Droyne, the Tezcat have spread to a few other worlds and formed a pocket empire largely controlled by their Shaper Religion. They have become a valuable resource to some of their neighbouring polities, providing zealous mercenaries to those willing to overlook their xenophobic and racist ways.

THE SUERRAT

The Suerrat – scientific name *Homo sapiens suerratensis* – are a minor human subspecies, transplanted from Terra and genetically modified by the Ancients to survive on a colder world in orbit around a dim star. The Suerrat claim to be a Major Race, as they successfully settled several planets and established an interstellar polity before gaining jump drive technology from the Vilani. Their relationship with the Vilani was initially strained but they were eventually conquered and absorbed into the Ziru Sirka during the Consolidation Wars. The Suerrat freed themselves of Vilani rule and allied with Terrans late in the Interstellar War. During the Long Night, the Suerrat re-established their interstellar government and expanded its borders. With the arrival of the Third Imperium, the Suerrat were soon absorbed into the polity, although they chaffed at being controlled once again by others.

Suerrat can be found across the Third Imperium and Solomani Confederation. However, the densest populations can be found in the Suerrat Republic – officially known as the Suerrat Cultural Region – in the Domain of Ilelish.



PHYSIOLOGY

The Ancients transplanted the Suerrat from Terra to Ilelish (Ilelish sector 2907) approximately 300,000 years ago. Ilelish is a cool forested world in orbit around a dim red dwarf star. As part of the relocation, the Ancients performed genetic modifications to the Suerrat, activating several dormant traits in the Solomani and Vilani to better enable them to survive their new home.

Genetic scrutiny has shown the Suerrat to be far more closely related to *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* than *Homo sapiens sapiens*. This is exemplified by the shape of the skull, hair colour, heavy muscle and bone density – despite the low gravity of Ilelish – and other physiological traits. In addition, whereas modern Terran humans exhibit up to 0.3% of Neanderthal genes in their genome, Suerrat have up to 65% of their genome in common with Neanderthals.

Suerrat are small yet heavy for their size, averaging 160 centimetres in height and 60 kilograms in weight. They are very broad across the chest and hips and quite muscular. There is very little height and weight difference between males and females.

Suerrat skin tones range from light brown to blue-black based on the amount of melanin in the epidermis. As an adaption to their cooler environment, Suerrat bodies are covered in silky hair except for the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, the neck and face. Hair colour is generally red to orange but less commonly can be various shades of brown to black. Blonde hair is exceedingly rare among Suerrat and is considered odd. The darkness of the hair matches the darkness of the skin. Despite appearances, Suerrat do not have more hair than Solomani or Vilani – it is simply much longer and thicker. Curiously, Suerrat cannot grow facial hair.

Their arms and legs are long and muscular. Both their hands and feet are long and bear thick skin on the palms and soles. Suerrat feet are more prehensile than those of Solomani or Vilani but not as dexterous as their hands. The big toe on each foot is opposable to aid in climbing and the nails on both the hands and feet are broad, thick and naturally black.

Suerrat heads are somewhat broad and flat with heavy brow ridges and a wide flat nose. Their ears stick out somewhat from the side of their heads. Due to their star's low light level, Suerrat retinas are more sensitive to the visible spectrum. They have big eyes with a large pupil diameter in relation to the size of the eye to capture dim light. Eye colour ranges from hazel to brown and deep brown. Darker iris colours are found in darker haired individuals. While Suerrat can see far better in the dark than many other branches of Humaniti, their eyes are more sensitive to bright lights.

Other Suerrat senses are equivalent to those found among the Solomani and Vilani.

Internal differences are minor. The skull, despite being flat, has the same volume as most other humans due to its broadness. The orbits of the eyes are prominent and bear a bony sclerotic ring to support their large eyes. Unlike Solomani, who have 32 adult teeth, Suerrat have 36 adult teeth and a broader jaw to accommodate the extra dentition. Other skeletal differences are minor except to support the anatomical variances already mentioned.

The Suerrat larynx is somewhat higher in the throat than Solomani and Vilani. This results in a higher-pitched voice than would be expected. In many cases, Suerrat voices are somewhat child-like in pitch, even amongst males.

Suerrat have proportionally more Type II fast twitch fibres than slow twitch muscle fibres, making them stronger than expected from a world with low gravity. Their distal extremities also have proportionally more muscle fibres, making their hands and feet more dexterous on average than either Solomani or Vilani.

Suerrat have similar blood groups to those of other species of Humaniti. The most common groups are A, B, AB, O and AO, with A being most frequently found, followed by O, B, AB and finally AO. Rhesus factors are found approximately equally among the blood groups.

Despite the anatomical differences, Suerrat can breed with many other members of Humaniti.

LIFESPAN

Suerrat gestational period is equal to 41 weeks. Births tend to be relatively quick and painless, with few complications thanks to broad hips and pelvic opening. Single offspring are the norm, with twins being rare and triplets almost unheard of. Female offspring comprise 50% of births, with males making up 49%. The remaining 1% are intersex or indeterminate individuals.

New-borns rely entirely on their parents for care, which is shared as equally as possible between the parents. Immediately from birth, the young have a strongly developed Moro instinct, allowing them to cling to their parent's fur without assistance. At this stage, children are either nursed naturally by the mother or given an artificial milk substitute by bottle.

Young are introduced to solid foods at approximately six standard months old. As their teeth are only beginning to emerge, an adult relative will masticate the food for them and transfer it directly to the mouth. Suerrat youths are wholly weaned at approximately two standard years and can chew food independently.

Children are taught to be independent from an early age, yet there are no expectations regarding when a child should leave the family home. A child is considered an adult at 16 standard years of age and legally able to strike out on their own. However, it is common for adult children to remain living with their parents or very close by, up to and beyond the point of taking partners and having children of their own.

Suerrat are in the prime of their life from 19 to approximately 60 years of age. Their lifespans are slightly longer than the Solomani but not as long as Vilani. Suerrat tend to have an average lifespan of 110 standard years.

DIET

Suerrat are omnivores, able to consume plant and animal products equally easily. Offal and internal organs are highly prized delicacies. Naturally, individual preferences abound. Some Suerrat prefer to forgo animal flesh in favour of plant and fungal substitutes. Others still prefer to forego all animal products entirely and subsist on a purely plant-based diet. Suerrat physiology is geared towards obtaining nutrients from animal products, so care must be taken when they are excluded from the diet to ensure adequate nutrition.

Suerrat enjoy a broad range of preparation and cooking styles. Both plant and animal foods are equally enjoyed from raw to lightly seared to wholly cooked. They prefer their food to be lightly seasoned with few spices or herbs. As a holdover from the Ziru Sirka, Suerrat enjoy complementing their dishes with various condiments and sauces.

Meals usually include several courses beginning with a light course consisting of pickled vegetables. A main meal of protein and carbohydrates follows. Various vegetables, condiments and sauces accompany each course, which individuals may add to the main meal as they please. Simple broth is usually served next to cleanse the pallet, with a final course of sweets following the main meal.

Fluids from various sources are also enjoyed. Water, either naturally or artificially flavoured is standard. Rhalonni, a hot drink made from the dried bark of certain species of rhala tree is frequently consumed by both children and adults alike. Suerrat enjoy the consumption of alcohol, particularly rhalaki which is made from the fermented leaves gathered from different species of rhala tree.

Suerrat have also adopted several dishes from Terran cuisines. They particularly enjoy those from Asian cultures.

SOCIETY

Suerrat have a vast number of rich and varied cultures. However, these several generalisations apply almost universally.

SOCIAL

Suerrat, by their very nature, are a highly social species and enjoy cosmopolitan city life – more so than almost any other species of Humaniti. Their social nature is not a learned trait but a fundamental aspect of their psychology. Suerrat will naturally seek the company of others, finding equal value in the company of other sophonts as much as their own species. Even when not in the company of other sophonts, Suerrat often have favoured pets nearby to socialise.

Due to their social nature, Suerrat are far more comfortable living in close contact with others, rarely seeking time to be alone. Suerrat cities and enclaves are incredibly crowded compared to those of other sophonts. However, living in such crowded confines does not affect Suerrat negatively. Quite the contrary, they garner great comfort and satisfaction being near others. The Suerrat lack of understanding of 'personal space' is related to their social nature. They cannot comprehend the need of other sophonts requiring space around them which is considered their own. Suerrat will unconsciously invade others' personal space without concern for their comfort. If the subject of their close contact tries to move away to make some personal space, Suerrat will move right back into it. Trying to explain the need for personal space to them only leads to confusion on the part of the Suerrat.

Another aspect of their Suerrat socialisation is their tactile nature. Suerrat feel no compunction in initiating personal contact even with perfect strangers. Suerrat are likely to touch, hug and hold others incidentally. When Suerrat are together in a group, they all tend to touch one another in small ways – as a form of greeting, to emphasise comments during a conversation, to attract the attention of another and to seek comfort and security.

Suerrat seem to not understand a reluctance towards or desire not to indulge in physical contact. If asked not to touch another sophont, or if the reaction to their physical contact is negative, Suerrat generally react in surprise and disappointment. To their credit, Suerrat will not force physical contact on those who do not want it. Still, they will be visibly uncomfortable in their interactions and many struggle with keeping their hands to themselves.

Despite their openly affectionate nature, Suerrat do not kiss each other on the mouth as mouth-to-mouth contact is reserved for transferring food from parent to child. They find kissing to be distasteful and somewhat creepy. Instead of kissing, Suerrat show affection by placing their foreheads and noses together for a moment and breathing in deeply; the longer the contact, the deeper the connection.

Forcing Suerrat into solitary situations is exceedingly harmful to their mental health. They rapidly become depressed and despondent. There is nothing worse for Suerrat to be; on their own, away from the company of others. Even Suerrat prisons are social establishments where those convicted of crimes can still participate in the company of others.

FAMILY

Family is vital to Suerrat. Suerrat can enter a formal relationship at 16 but few do at such an early age. Suerrat families are often large and complicated as relationships are typically plural, with varying male and female members bonded together. The group is normally formed by several individuals who wish to be bonded, with new members entering and established members leaving the group once formed. There is no concept of dominance or hierarchy within the relationship – each member is an equal partner, regardless of when they joined the group. Decisions are normally conducted democratically, with each group member's input and desires bearing the same weight. Relationships may be formally recognised through a ceremony like a marriage or be entered into informally. Regardless of the formality of the relationship, they all bear equal weight in the eyes of Suerrat law.

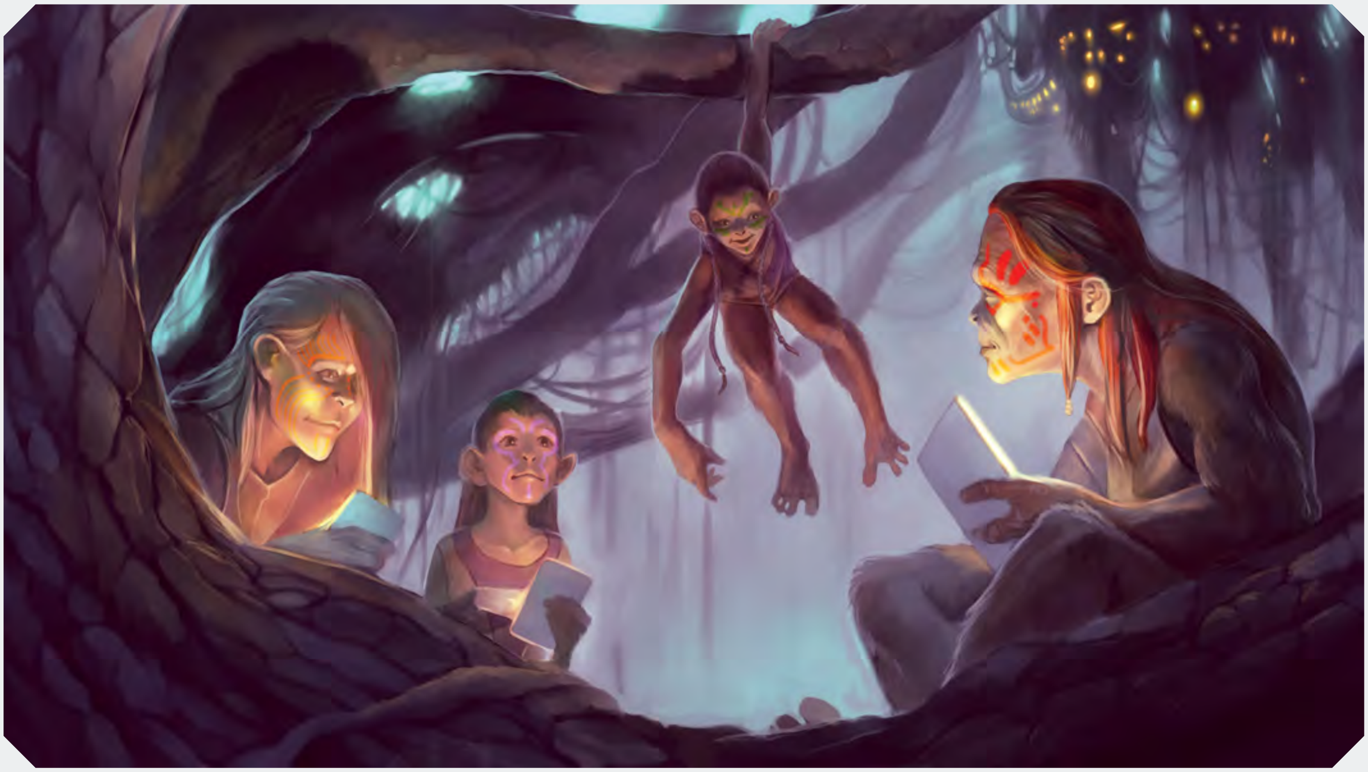
Relationships may be dissolved by one or more individuals leaving the group, or the entire group being dissolved through mutual agreement. In the case of the dissolution of the entire group, all material belongings are divided equally among the previous members. If only one leaves the group, the group's belongings are split equally and the departing member takes their share, so they are not disadvantaged when starting anew. This process is protected by Suerrat law. Most groupings frequently see the addition or subtraction of members but overall they are relatively stable.

There are no social taboos around Suerrat having intimate interactions outside their relationship group. Suerrat generally are open-minded about sex – it is seen as a natural expression of affection, a necessary aspect of social bonding and a stress outlet. As such, sex has become integral to many Suerrat interactions in a ritual called '*Igushaamusiku*'. Suerrat will seal trade deals with sex, conclude diplomatic discussions with sex, host formal gatherings where sex is used to get to know other guests and so on. Sex is always reciprocal and consensual between those involved and does not necessarily involve only one couple. As open as Suerrat are to sexual relations, they are horrified when physical intimacy is forced upon another against their will. Such acts draw the harshest of penalties on Suerrat worlds.

Suerrat have extended the use of sex during social interactions beyond their own species – where the involved species are sexually compatible. During the Ziru Sirka, the Vilani attempted multiple times to curb what they saw as Suerrat 'promiscuity' even to the point of outlawing sexual relations outside of legally paired adults. Still, they never succeeded in eradicating *Igushaamusiku*. The practice was wholly restored once the Suerrat were liberated from Vilani oppression. Today, modern Suerrat understand their practice of *Igushaamusiku* is not always welcome among other species and take no offence at its offer being refused.

Suerrat adore their children. They hold a special place within Suerrat society and are strongly protected by law. Parents normally dote on their children, showering them with love and affection. Children are raised communally within the group. Each member of the group is seen as the children's parents, regardless of whom they share genetics with. Where technology allows it, it is common for children to share genetics with each member of the group's bonded adults, making them all literal parents.

Children remain with their parents during their formative years and are normally born within a family group. There are no social taboos around single mothers but there are around raising a child outside of a family group. If one of the child's parents is part of a group, the child will be raised within the group. If not, the child is raised by the parental group of the mother. In either case, parents are not excluded from participating in raising their child unless there is a good reason.



Children are educated by their parents during the first few years of their lives. They are taught the fundamentals of speech, social etiquette and the beginnings of independence. As soon as the child can, small household chores are assigned to them, becoming more complex as the child grows older. Once children reach the approximate age of four standard years, formal education is expected to commence. Children spend a portion of each day being educated away from their parents. Primary education lasts from the ages of four through to 16, when the child is seen as an adult and able to start their own life. Suerrat may pursue advanced education which is equivalent to university or vocational training for between two and four years before deciding to pursue a career or continue with their education. Children will normally remain at home until they form a family group.

Family groups often include several generations of Suerrat. Elderly Suerrat who cannot care for themselves are generally looked after by their adult children unless they require constant medical aid. Elder Suerrat are afforded a great deal of respect. Their wisdom and advice are frequently sought after and often deferred to when consensus between bonded partners cannot be reached. Elders also play a significant role in the raising of children.

Suerrat family groups share a single dwelling. Most dwellings are built in an open plan style, with only a few large rooms. Families sleep together in a large bed and often share the bed with family pets. Meals are prepared and eaten communally. Dwellings are filled with natural or genetically engineered plants, often blurring the line between outdoors and indoors.

As Suerrat have virtually no concept of personal space, their homes are typically built very closely and crowded together in what others have described as a claustrophobic nightmare. Families can easily see into other families' homes and everyone knows everyone else's business. There is little privacy to be found, which does not bother the Suerrat but other species can find it stifling.

COOPERATION

Suerrat are a highly cooperative species, as can be expected for a species as social as they are. Because of this, the Suerrat cooperate for immediate benefit and genetic relatedness, as well as signalling honesty and being part of a group. Furthermore, they readily teach and assist others, even if it requires self-sacrifice. Amongst themselves, Suerrat are never left without help, leading to strong social connections and cooperative problem-solving.

When dealing with other species, Suerrat expect a return of their willingness to cooperate. The reciprocation does not necessarily have to be equal – Suerrat very much value the effort shown in offering to cooperate almost as much as the act itself. Suerrat are always prepared to cooperate with and assist others, even if it means they are somewhat disadvantaged or ‘put out’ by said cooperation. Occasions have occurred where others have tried to take advantage of the Suerrat’s cooperative nature. Such behaviour has been rewarded with Suerrat reducing the cooperation they are willing to participate in with the offending party to a socially acceptable minimum.

While Suerrat value cooperation over conflict, when diplomacy and negotiations break down, they will not hesitate to fight if they or their way of life is threatened.

NON-AGGRESSION

Suerrat are a peaceful species. Their character is a direct result of their social and cooperative nature. Suerrat will instinctually look for ways of averting conflict with a peaceful resolution. Amongst themselves, Suerrat rarely argue or fight and throughout their history wars have been exceedingly rare compared to the histories of other species of Humaniti. Suerrat refrain from behaving offensively and avoid offending others by being extremely polite and exhibiting good manners and etiquette. This relaxes Suerrat and allows them to feel comfortable with one another but can appear somewhat amusing to others, as Suerrat repeatedly defer to each other, apologise for the slightest social gaffe or insist they have not been offended.

When Suerrat find themselves in a potential conflict with each other, both parties will back away and apologise for any perceived slights. Both parties will politely or humorously state the apology is unnecessary as no slight had occurred. They will then attempt to address the situation in a manner other species may view as avoiding the topic. On the contrary, Suerrat will probe the source of the conflict from various angles while indirectly addressing the issue to disarm the conflict with a resolution that benefits both parties.

The Suerrat language encodes politeness at its very core. Suerrat have three main levels of politeness; one for intimate acquaintances, family and friends; a separate one for casual acquaintances and strangers; and another for business, politics and religions. Verb morphology reflects these levels and some verbs have special hyper-polite suppletive forms. This is found with some nouns and interrogative pronouns as well. Suerrat language employs different personal pronouns for each person according to age, degree of acquaintance, position in family, social groups, society and other cultural factors.

This tendency towards politeness should not be confused with a stuffy or self-important nature. On the contrary, Suerrat are a fun-loving people who are likelier to laugh off unintended slights than be offended by them. Their politeness is not a form of maintaining social distance, it is a form of inclusion and togetherness intended to ensure everyone feels comfortable.

When dealing with other species, Suerrat endeavour to understand their cultural tendencies to avoid inadvertently insulting them. If an unintended insult occurs or conflict arises, Suerrat are always the first to back down and seek to apologise. Negotiation and diplomacy are potent tools in the hands of Suerrat but they are not beyond using commercial and economic means to avoid conflicts.

Suerrats’ peaceful nature has led to some other species viewing them as a simpering people and has caused some to try to take advantage of them. Those species have quickly learned the error of their ways. When all negotiations have broken down and all other avenues have been exhausted, Suerrat will not hesitate to defend themselves with a savagery which belies their normally peaceful outlook.

NATURE LOVING

Suerrat hold a deep love and respect for the natural world. Consequently, few Suerrat cities lack extensive parks and reservations, with some blurring the lines between city and wilderness.

During their history, many native Ilelish species have been domesticated by Suerrat both as companions and to assist in labour. The earliest archaeological records show the first animal domesticated by prehistoric Suerrat was a dog-like communal animal which lived in the same boles and holes which the Suerrat sheltered in. As Suerrat reached new worlds, new animals were added to their list of domesticated species. Most Suerrat have at least one pet and it is not unusual for Suerrat to have entire menageries. Animal companions are deeply loved by their Suerrat owners and are part of the family. They are treated equally in many respects and often doted upon as if they were beloved children. When a pet dies, its Suerrat owner is often devastated. Suerrat businesses and corporations are among the few institutions allowing bereavement leave for their employees when they lose a pet.

As a result of their love of nature, Suerrat openly and loudly support the rights of animals. They strongly oppose the use of animals in scientific research, with some Suerrat engaging in clandestine operations to free such unfortunate creatures. They discourage the imprisonment of animals in zoos and despise the practice of factory farming. This is not to say Suerrat do not have zoos or farms. To the contrary, their zoos are some of the best examples of deep respect shown to the animal within, using free ranging enclosures where the animals' comfort and wellbeing is the first and highest priority. Zoos are areas of animal preservation and extinction prevention, where endangered animals are bred and habituated for release to increase wild populations.

Suerrat farms are also areas where animal welfare and comfort are a priority. Food animals are free range with a minimum of outside interference. They are slaughtered humanely and with no pain whatsoever. It can be said Suerrat food animals have the best lives ever, with only one bad day. Even with this animal welfare focused farming, some Suerrat will not eat products from animals, relying instead on laboratory grown alternatives. In fact, Suerrat laboratory grown meat and other animal products are some of the best in Charted Space.

Suerrat homes are often highly decorated with plants, supporting a small ecosystem. Suerrat value the beauty of plants and often indulge in polite competition with family members and neighbours over who has the most elaborate and beautiful plants and gardens. Genetically engineered plants also provide multiple benefits from cleaning internal air of pollutants, providing consumables year-round, creating a living carpet which cleans itself, and so forth.

As a result of this closeness to nature, Suerrat excel at biology and defy the generalisation that non-Solomani branches of Humaniti are backward in their biological and medical sciences. Their close connection to nature also means very little will upset Suerrat as much as the wanton or careless destruction of ecosystems. Irresponsible mining operations and similar industries in the Ilelish Sector have frequently faced protests and the occasional aggressive terrorist action by Suerrat extremists.

NOVELTY

Suerrat highly value novelty. Their interest and attention is easily drawn towards the new and exciting. This can lead some Suerrat to have difficulty focusing on tasks at hand in favour of something new – the easiest way to grab a Suerrat's attention is to show them something they have not seen before. While this does have some basis, Suerrat can focus intently on what they are doing while still noticing and commenting on something novel.

Their attraction to the new and novel has positively affected their scientific and social advancements. Being willing to entertain and embrace ideas has led to advancements which other species who are not as easily distracted may overlook. The opposite is also true – pursuing novel ideas has led to delays in some advancements as scientists and researchers have ignored established processes in pursuit of something different.

Due to their love of novelty, Suerrat society is heavily influenced by the latest trends and ideas. Suerrat will eagerly pursue the newest fashions, entertainment, gadgets and trinkets with mercurial speed, not wanting to be left behind. Suerrat cities often display a chaotic series of advertisements, bombarding inhabitants with images and sound of the latest trend.

The natural by-product of this behaviour is the Suerrat desire to be seen as knowledgeable about the newest fad and fashions and their pioneering of new trends. Few things upset Suerrat more than feeling they are behind the times.

BELIEFS

Suerrat are strong proponents of social equality, prioritising it above all other philosophies. They consider all sophonts, regardless of sex, gender, religion or species, equal in fundamental worth and moral status. Furthermore, they believe all sophonts have the same inviolate rights and responsibilities.

This philosophy is exhibited in every aspect of Suerrat society. Suerrat have no social class structures which are superior or inferior to other classes. They have no pronouns which identify gender or sex. No professions are regarded as the sole province of males or females or differences in financial remuneration based on gender or sex. Childrearing is the responsibility of both parents equally, regardless of gender.

This belief can sometimes conflict with the basic principles of the Third Imperium. The Imperium's ingrained social classes and hierarchy of nobility directly opposes the Suerrat's fundamental philosophy of egalitarianism. Suerrat refuse to use noble titles between themselves and amongst others with reluctance. Many openly oppose the Imperial class and nobility system, arguing for an equal system where none are seen as superior.

Some Suerrat argue the interests of animals must also be considered and speciesism should be rejected. They lobby for the cessation of the exploitation of animals and aid afforded to suffering animals. Certain more extreme lobbyists amongst the Suerrat believe animals cannot speak for themselves, so priority must be afforded to them.

While Suerrat have a wide and varied number of spiritual and religious beliefs, one commonly held idea is of Nokar – what could be loosely defined as demons. The belief in Nokar was far more prevalent in the past but many modern Suerrat still hold some belief in them. Nokar rarely take physical form but they can appear in various sizes and resemble winged and tailed lizard-like humanoids. Images resembling this description have been found all over Ilelish, from prehistoric tree bole habitations paintings to modern sculptures. Nokar are said to be able to control the actions of Suerrat and possess the mentally vulnerable to do their bidding. Before the modern era, mental illnesses were attributed to Nokar possession.

Archaeologists hypothesise the Nokar are nothing more than a racial memory of the Ancients. They assert the physical description that fits the current understanding of the Ancients. The stories of Nokar powers of control and possession, they argue, are at most dim memories of having served the Ancients in the distant past, passed down and distorted through the generations. Most Suerrat accept the current interpretation of Nokar but some still strongly believe in their existence and the impacts they can have.

Like all sophonts, many Suerrat are religious. Most faiths are based upon one or more nature deities, generalised animism or pantheism. In addition, many native Suerrat believe in a planetary mother deity and a solar father deity.

Suerrat are open minded about their faiths and it is not unusual for them to change religions frequently when new ones are presented. This has led Suerrat faith to be shifting and mercurial in nature. Very few faiths can boast a continuous history of centuries – many religions have died only to be revived later as a belief system which is new and different.

Suerrat dislike large, organised religions or those which have hierarchical structures. They prefer those where individuals are free to practice as they see fit without the oversight of a controlling organisation.

Several Terran religions have found favour among the Suerrat, introduced late in the Interstellar Wars period and during the Rule of Man. Shintoism and Daoism in particular are favoured among Suerrat and have a small but notable proportion of followers.

The faiths detailed here are only a small example of those followed by Suerrat and are not comprehensive.

Spirit Children: A relatively new religion which can trace its origins to a more pastoral way of life before the Suerrat industrial revolution on Ilelish. It shares many similarities with animism-based faiths found throughout Charted Space. It is a peaceful religion which preaches harmony with nature and living in accordance with the passing of seasons.

Spirit Children believe every object in nature, from the giant black hole in the centre of the galaxy down to quarks and electrons, possesses a unique spirit. The spirits of component atoms combine to become the spirits of the object or entity they form. They believe spirits have their own wills and volition, reflecting the material object they belong to. Therefore, the spirit of a rock is stationary and patient while the spirit of a Suerrat is mobile and sentient. Some spirits, such as those belonging to stars, galaxies and black holes are god-like in power. Spirit Children view Ilelish as hosting a maternal spirit-deity and the sun a paternal spirit-deity. Conversely, the religion teaches that technology and artificial constructs do not possess spirits but are possessed by Nokar and are destructive to the natural spirits of the world.

Believers avoid technology, using it with care and consideration, restricting its use as much as possible in modern worlds. The most fervent and extreme believers will eschew the use of technology completely, believing the evil Nokar strive to destroy the natural world in favour of an artificial one. They often turn their backs on modern society in favour of creating communes of like-minded individuals who live life as before the introduction of advanced technology, relying primarily on animal and human power.

The religion has no central structure – each group stands independently but several groups often gather for larger rituals. Individuals within these groups may be seen as more knowledgeable and enlightened than others. Leaders within the group perform the functions of the priesthood and perform initiations of new members and clergy.

The religion celebrates four holy days yearly, equating to the solstices and equinoxes on Ilelish. Worshippers on other worlds use those world's equinoxes, if they have them, or revert to using those of Ilelish. The celebrations normally include rituals noting the passage of the last orbital phase into the new one, feasts and games.

Church of the Stellar Truth: This disavowed denomination of the Church of the Stellar Divinity is viewed more as a cult than a religion. Its origins can be found in Vilani faiths with influence drawn from the Solomani Hypothesis. Its popularity has varied widely, almost disappearing at some points in time only to reappear, sometimes decades later, with newfound enthusiasm and dedication.

Proponents of the Church of Stellar Truth believe each star is a deity and the Ancients are their divine servants. The Ancients were sent forth by the stars to seed life throughout the universe, focusing heavily on spreading Humaniti to as many worlds as possible. Proponents profess the Ancients are still present and continue to spread human species through space. Their doctrine states the Ancients are still visiting the Suerrat and their genetic material is being used to create a superior new human species. Some believers even report they have been abducted by Ancients, taken aboard their spacecraft and medically examined. Others further say they have been personally involved in the Ancients' breeding program. Such individuals can achieve celebrity-like status within the cult, drawing followers to them and forming new groups. Furthermore, they believe government authorities are fully aware of the Ancients and are complicit in their activities whilst denying their existence.

Those who profess to have encountered the Ancients describe them as tall, thin grey or white humanoids with large, elongated heads, large black eyes, no nose and thin lipless mouths. Experts have noted the similarity in this description with beings described in Terran mythology. The Church of the Stellar Truth profess this is further evidence of Ancient activity in the past and present.

The faith is relatively small but widely scattered. It has no central authority, with each group essentially operating independently with potentially differing beliefs. Nevertheless, annual events are common, where believers from different groups come together to discuss their faith, hear reports of abductions and hold services where they attempt to commune with the Ancients. In addition, individuals and groups spread their faith through books and presentations, making themselves available to be interviewed to pass on their beliefs.

The faithful can be quite fervent in their beliefs, often pointing to completely unrelated events as proof of Ancient activity. Most Suerrat view the Church of the Stellar Truth as a silly fad, little better than the raving of delusional conspiracy theorists. Those who follow this faith tend to have almost fanatical beliefs.

Temple of the All-Mother: Also known as Shidhism, this religion originates in the distant past, with some proponents claiming it can be traced back to Suerrat prehistory. However, most modern experts deny such claims, stating it is highly unfeasible that a prehistoric religion could survive unbroken into the current era.

Shidhism is another faith based on the concept of animism. Believers profess all living organisms possess a spirit and all spirits are part of Shidha, a universal mother deity. The faithful believe the Shidha spirit slumbers and through creating a network of mythology and experience, they will provide a stimulus to reawaken her. An individual who has an awakened Shidha spirit is believed to be more in tune with both the deity and the universe and acts as an inspiration and guide to those who have yet to awaken the spirit. As more individual spirits are awakened, the Shidha spirit grows in power and effect within the universe.

Reawakening the Shidha spirit is accomplished through meditation and prayer, creating mindfulness within the individual and cutting attachment to materialism. Lay worship is the norm amongst most followers but particularly pious individuals may become monks in one of the many All-Mother temples built to accommodate them. The temples are also the location of public rituals and teachings the laity can attend.

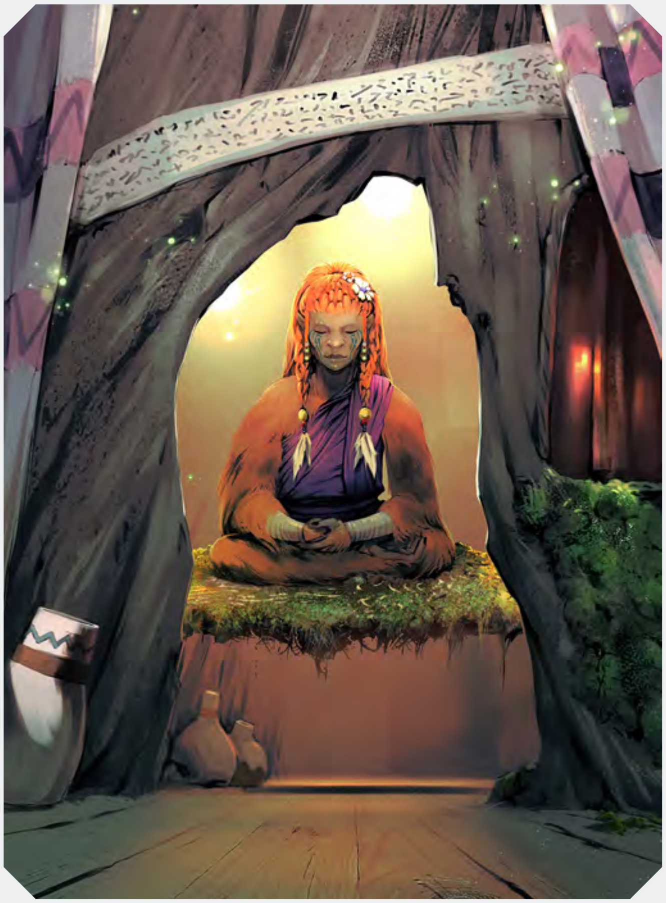
The Temple of the All-Mother has a significant following throughout the Suerrat Republic, with followers also found among Suerrat throughout Charted Space. The faith even has followers among other sophont species but nothing approaching the numbers found among the Suerrat. While the faith has no single authority, the doctrines between individual groups have remarkable conformity. A few breakaway groups hold slightly differing philosophies but even these are accepted within the greater congregation.

The faithful also believe in the reincarnation of the mother spirit. Reincarnation progresses from the lowest of plants to animals and finally into sophonts. Each reincarnation increases the opportunities for the individual to awaken the spirit. The closer a spirit comes to awakening, the further up the progression the reincarnated spirit will be. Conversely, losing connection with the mother spirit leads to reincarnation lower down on the progression. An individual can progress up and down the reincarnation cycle many times before achieving awakening. Once they have awakened the mother spirit, they are free from the reincarnation cycle and merge with Shidha upon death.

Believers are taught it is their responsibility to assist those unable to awaken the spirit themselves. Meditation and prayer in the company of plants and animals are believed to provide this assistance. Some All-Mother temples focus solely on assisting plants and animals in awakening their mother spirit, foregoing all interactions with the outside world as they practice their faith.

Shidhism bears a solid resemblance to the religion of Buddhism which originated on Terra. Some use this similarity as evidence of the universality of their faith, claiming Buddhism is a facet of Shidhism. Naturally, this belief has many opponents and is not widely accepted.

The Inward Eye: The Inward Eye is a cult rapidly attracting followers among the Suerrat. The religion espouses that the only way the divine can truly be experienced is by using psychoactive substances. The structure of the faith is very loose, without any established priesthood. A single charismatic personality, a Suerrat named Kaisokiituar, leads the cult. Her background is very much shrouded in mystery. She became prominent in 1072 on Imsaggir (Ilelish sector 2216) and has since gathered a significant following. Devoted followers have carried the faith to surrounding worlds, finding adherents among Suerrat and other sophonts alike.



At first, the cult was seen as a relatively harmless fad, likely to fade away given a little time. Unfortunately, the opposite has occurred. More alarmingly, Kaisokiituar has started openly criticising the Third Imperium and the Emperor, encouraging her followers to stand against what she calls an ‘impersonal autocrat and his privileged elite’. She has openly made calls to oppose Imperial rule and strive for a more egalitarian regime which does not place the interests of unworthy figureheads above those of the populace.

Imperial and Republic authorities are watching the Inward Eye very closely, ready to act at the first sign of open rebellion. Unfortunately, the faith has gathered some well-known and famous Suerrat personalities who have used their popularity to help spread the Inward Eye’s teachings.

GOVERNMENT

Suerrat boast a wide variety of governments. However, some types are preferred over others. Governments which emphasise cooperation and input by the populace are favoured. Democracies, feudal technocracies and civil service bureaucracies are all quite common. However, the same ethic of collaboration and social harmony which produces democracies has led to government by charismatic dictatorships and oligarchies, as well as several religious autocracies.

One concept of governance found on all predominately Suerrat worlds is social and economic egalitarianism. This is most often displayed by public ownership of city and world infrastructure through the government. Any surplus product or profit made by infrastructural organisations is placed back into the public purse, thereby benefitting society rather than a few elite business owners. This concept is often accompanied by the government providing all citizens with a living basic universal income which is tax-free and unconditional. This practice ensures no citizen is ever forced to live in poverty and limitations on individual personal growth and improvement imposed by poverty are eradicated.

Suerrat worlds generally provide free education through a publicly owned education system to all citizens, regardless of the level of education sought. Citizens of Suerrat worlds can pass through basic to advanced and even specialised education without any financial burden or restriction. Individuals who desire to become professional students are not discouraged from such endeavours.

All Suerrat citizens have access to a universal health system covering all their medical, dental and psychological needs. Furthermore, all medical services are publicly owned and there are no private hospitals or doctors who charge exorbitant fees for their services. Therefore, medical services are equally accessible to everyone regardless of financial situation. Thanks to this service, the citizens on Suerrat worlds are often some of the healthiest in Charted space.

On many Suerrat worlds, ‘private’ businesses and corporations are also publicly owned similarly to infrastructure. On other worlds, private companies are owned by their employees equally, providing them with an equal say in business decisions and allowing them to share in the successes and failures of the business. Joint ownership in this fashion encourages a remarkable dedication and loyalty towards the business as employees personally profit from their business’s success as opposed to an elite owner or an unknown group of shareholders.

Suerrat value public input into their governance. It is not unusual for Suerrat worlds to be governed by some form of participatory democracy regardless of their overall government, where the whole populace votes on all decisions. On some worlds, this form of governance extends to all citizens having the ability to table their own policies and legislation and the freedom to speak publicly to support their submission. Naturally, this level of participation in a large population could prove troublesome or even impossible without access to TL7 or better information technology. Conversely, with small populations located within proximity, participation in this form of democracy is relatively easy regardless of the Tech Level.

LAW

There is no universal Suerrat legal system. Similarly, the laws on individual planets can vary considerably but there are several legal similarities among them. The Suerrat Republic essentially operates under the laws of the Third Imperium. Due to the peculiarities of the Republic Charter, all the worlds within the Suerrat Cultural Zone may agree on individual laws being in effect on every member planet if they desire.

The Suerrat find discrimination particularly distasteful and it is not unusual to find it illegal on predominately Suerrat worlds. Punishments normally involve fines and restitutions but on worlds with particularly high Law Levels, discrimination can bring long periods of incarceration for perpetrators.

Violent crimes such as assault, battery, abduction, manslaughter and murder are not tolerated by Suerrat law in any way. Suerrat highly value life and the bodily rights of individuals. Therefore, such crimes are viewed with significant disgust by Suerrat. The punishment for such crimes is extremely harsh by Suerrat standards and always includes incarceration for substantial periods.

Crimes against the physical property of others, such as burglary, embezzlement and fraud are rare among Suerrat – in a society which encourages financial equality and where everyone is afforded the ability to live comfortably. Still, property crimes are viewed dimly by Suerrat and laws regarding such crimes are ingrained within the legal system. Such crimes also draw punishments of incarceration but the length of time is significantly less than those imposed over violent crimes.

Commercial law favours the consumer over the corporation. Contrary to many legal systems, corporations are not seen as individuals and any criminal actions a corporation takes lie on the individual or group who authorised or performed them.

Crimes against the environment draw some of the harshest punishments. Crimes such as industrial pollution, sabotage, vandalism and destruction are never tolerated. On some Suerrat worlds, environmental crimes can draw the death penalty.

Some Suerrat worlds are unusual in that they afford the same legal protections to animals as they do to sophonts. On such worlds, crimes against animals are treated the same as crimes against sophonts and draw the same severity of punishment.

Incarceration is somewhat relaxed among the Suerrat. Prisoners have access to entertainment, education and employment if they wish. They retain all their rights, including the right to vote. The only right which is denied is the freedom of movement. Suerrat prisons are strongly focused on rehabilitation over punishment. Prisoners are allowed to interact with each other openly except where individuals have proven to be a risk to others. Day release programs are available to those who pose minor risk, enabling them to study or work outside of the prison and return in the evenings. Prisoners afforded such freedoms are fitted with a tracking system to be easily located if they fail to return.

Criminals who are violent against other prisoners pose an interesting problem for Suerrat. Their psychological need to be close to one another makes solitary confinement impractical and a further danger to the inmates' mental health. Such cases are usually addressed using medication, psychiatric assistance and intense rehabilitation.

DRESS, ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Suerrat fashion tends to be simple. Most clothing consists of a simple tunic that leaves bare arms and legs. Tunics are most often form-fitting with few loose extremities which can be caught on tree branches. They prefer natural fibres to artificial ones. Their clothing tends to be brightly coloured and they enjoy mixing and matching colours in their ensembles, often producing a discordant clash of jarring hues and shades. It must be said Vargr find Suerrat use of colour highly favourable.

In hot weather, Suerrat are happy to forego clothing altogether – their body hair is long enough to cover areas other species may find 'embarrassing'. However, they will include sleeves and long trousers to their usual tunic when cold.

Suerrat prefer to go barefoot when able. If they must wear shoes, they tend to be made of soft and comfortable materials and fashioned in the likeness of mittens, leaving the opposable toe/thumb free for gripping purposes. Some footwear styles are fashioned after gloves, allowing all the toes to be free for a finer level of manipulation.

While Suerrat love to follow fashion trends, they tend to find most clothing worn by other human species too restrictive or fussy for unrestricted movement. They will eagerly adapt new fashions to suit their preferences, however.

Suerrat do not have a great fondness for jewellery. They find it to be a snag risk, breaking and becoming lost or endangering the owner. Therefore, if any jewellery is worn, it is often simple and close to the skin, such as stud earrings. Rings comprising simple bands are sometimes worn on both the fingers and toes. Jewellery is generally made of precious metals or natural substances such as horn, bone or stone.

Interestingly, precious gems and jewels hold an unusual position in Suerrat fashion. Instead of being worn as part of a piece of jewellery, they are worn inset into the teeth. A small cavity is created in the front of the tooth, into which a small cut jewel is placed and set with cement which has healing and antibacterial properties. The adhesive prevents the tooth and gum from becoming infected or necrotic. Suerrat lovers often give each other such gems as a sign of affection or an indication of their commitment to their relationship. It is not unusual for Suerrat to have several teeth modified in this way.

Suerrat enjoy styling their hair, both on their heads and bodies. The most common form of styling is hair dyeing. Some Suerrat even dye their hair two or more different – although not necessarily complimentary – colours. Where the technology is available, many Suerrat are not opposed to undergoing genetic editing to obtain the hair colour they desire, sometimes making colour changes frequently. This is often found among younger Suerrat but enough older Suerrat enjoy this form of self-expression too. Other common forms of styling include braiding, beading and the addition of small pieces of decoration such as small shells, feathers, polished animal bone, horns, leaves and flowers.

Both male and female Suerrat enjoy using makeup for self-expression and art. Makeup is applied in broad strokes comprised primarily of geometrical designs, which tend to be bold and simple. The eyes and the cheeks are most often decorated to enhance their features and draw attention to them. Makeup comes in many colours. Younger Suerrat prefer bright, vibrant colours while older Suerrat tend to restrict themselves to more muted earthy tones but no traditions guide this.

Suerrat are a creative people and they enjoy many forms of art. As they are naturally drawn to the new and exciting, they constantly experiment with new art forms and rediscover old ones. Innovative art is very well received by Suerrat but their interest can quickly shift when the next new thing comes along. Suerrat prefer communal art which can be shared and participated in as a group rather than individually.

Visual arts, such as paintings and drawings are normally created by a group of artists who add their own vision to the piece. As can be expected, such communal compositions can be somewhat chaotic in nature. Suerrat prefer abstract art over realistic art and most pieces will feature a single unifying style. Painting and drawings are frequently a riot of colour and texture.

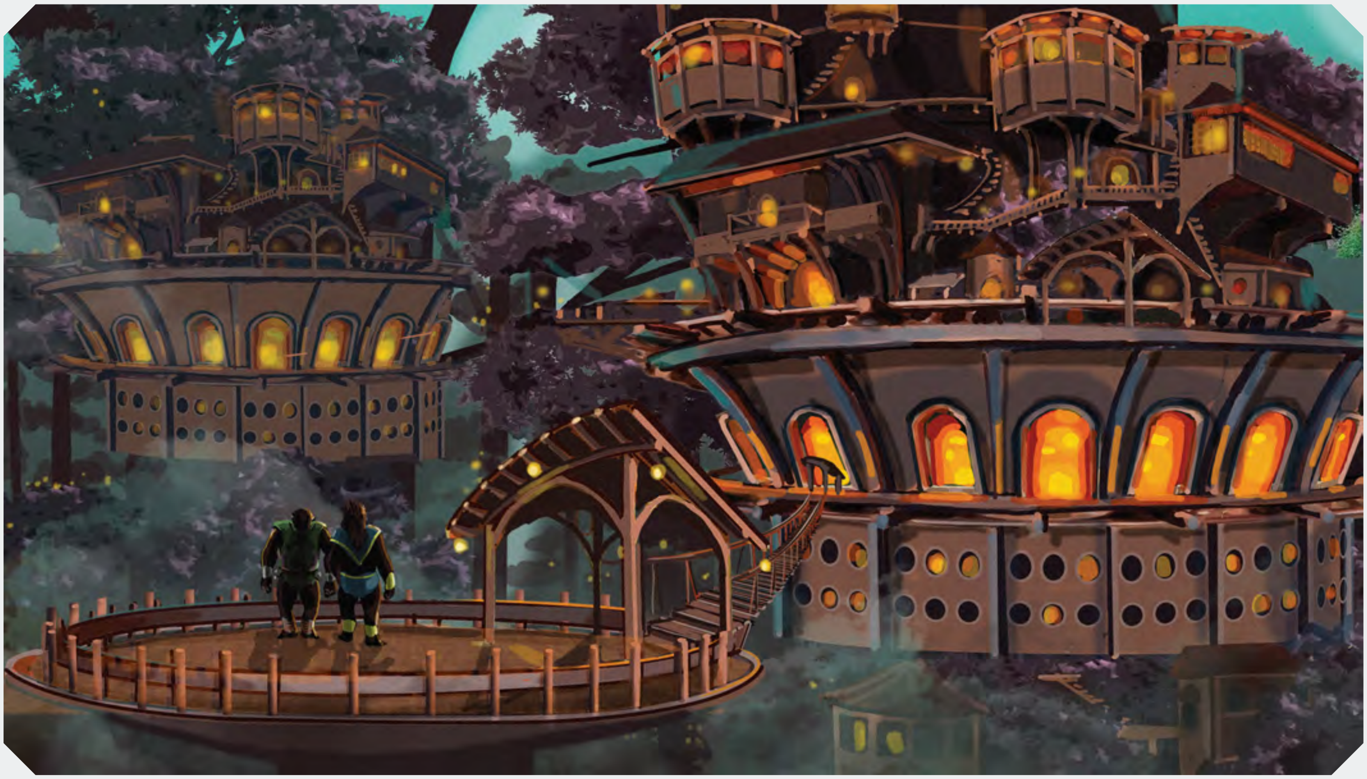
Sculpture is likewise often abstract in nature and created by a group. Sculptures frequently attempt to capture an emotion, or series of emotions. Sculptures are rarely static but include a multitude of moving parts in what is called kinetic art. The movement can be uniform and predictable, or random and erratic. Suerrat prefer to sculpt using natural materials, such as wood, stone, metal and paper.

The performing arts are an interesting art form among Suerrat. Whereas in other cultures, where artists perform for a non-participatory audience, Suerrat performing arts not only expects but welcomes audience participation. Performances are dynamic and exciting, as no one knows which direction it will take. Skilled performers can guide audience participation towards a desired outcome. Unlike the visual arts, some performing arts are enacted by individuals, along with the audience providing communal input. Performances are routinely live – Suerrat gain no real enjoyment from participating in a recording.

With their advanced understanding of genetics, Suerrat are the leading creators of genetic art – the act of manipulating lifeforms as a form of artistic expression. This can go beyond the creation of exotic pets and plants but due to their respect for life, Suerrat never allow their genetic manipulation to impact the quality of life of any animal. Instead, living art is designed with minimal brain function for continued life, with no ability to sense pain, fear or any other emotion. Genetic art can be truly bizarre. Some sophonts find it horrifying and macabre. Most Suerrat quickly explain the life form has no sensations and is only alive in the same sense as a cloned organ. Some Suerrat extremists strongly oppose the creation of genetic art, citing it completely disregards the organisms' rights as a living being and no life should be created purely for the enjoyment or entertainment of another. Regardless of the caveats, some worlds have criminalised the creation and ownership of genetic art.

The natural world heavily influences Suerrat architecture. Suerrat originally inhabited the interconnected hollows formed within the giant Rhala trees native to Ilelish. These hollows served as adequate habitats for most of the species' history and many Suerrat continue to live within them both on Ilelish and the worlds where the trees have been established.

At first, Suerrat did not modify the hollows but quickly expanded them while taking great care not to kill the tree. External structures constructed primarily from wood – such as balconies, platforms, exterior rooms and bridges were soon added in the branches of the trees. As technology advanced and gravitic technology became available, floating platforms were built beside the trees. Modern Suerrat cities continue incorporating the rhala trees into their settlements, creating an unusual but lovely blend of buildings and trees.



Suerrat architecture tends towards squat construction which blends easily into the forest. Buildings are created with large open internal spaces where groups of Suerrat can easily gather. Construction materials include a combination of manufactured and natural materials. Most buildings have a somewhat rustic feel, even when made from advanced materials. Architecture features circular structures which wrap around the trunks of the Rhala trees. Windows, skylights and doorways are also circular. Doorways tend to be large to allow several Suerrat to use them simultaneously. Walkways and bridges are wide and allow pedestrians to traverse the city without travelling on the ground.

Suerrat cities are very crowded. Rhala trees naturally grow closely together and artificial structures fill many of the spaces between the trees. Suerrat populations are at the density where other species find the mental health of the inhabitants deteriorates and violent crimes become commonplace. This does not occur among Suerrat; in fact, the opposite is true – Suerrat who cannot live in proximity commonly see increases in violent crimes and a decline in mental health.

Transport is relegated to the lower levels of Suerrat cities. Where gravitics are unavailable, ground vehicles prevail. Roads are built intertwining between the trees and below foot traffic. Road construction always considers the environment, with great care taken to disturb it as little as possible. Where gravitic technology is readily available, vehicular traffic is still relegated to below the city's buildings but roads are no longer used, and those areas are rehabilitated back to the natural state of the forest.

Due to their love of nature, Suerrat prefer to terraform and settle airless and otherwise uninhabitable worlds, living in great domed cities until the planet has been made suitably habitable. Even while living in these domed cities, Suerrat will include arrays of lush wild environments so as not to be separated from nature. Where domes are impractical or not possible, Suerrat ensure their settlements include many plants to soften the harsh lines of artificial architecture and give the settlement as natural an appearance as possible.

RECREATION

Suerrat enjoy a wide range of recreational activities, most being communal. Sports are particularly enjoyed, especially all sorts of ball sports. They love gravball and several highly successful players have been recruited into Imperial leagues from among the Suerrat. Another ball sport they enjoy is a traditional sport loosely translated as tree ball.

The sport is played with three opposing teams comprising seven players each – a goalkeeper, two offensive players and four defensive players. The playing field is a three-dimensional triangle. Originally, the field was established among a group of rhala trees with branches forming an obstacle course but modern games use artificial fields. Three goal hoops or holes are located high up at each corner of the field. The object of the game is to pass a ball through your team's goal while preventing the other teams from scoring goals. Points are attributed based on the difficulty and distance of the shot which achieved the goal. More difficult and distant shots score more points. Only offensive players may handle the ball. Defensive players work together to protect the offensive player from the opposing players trying to obtain the ball. The ball may be handled by either the hands or feet and may be thrown, kicked, chest- or head butted. Tree ball is a strictly no contact sport.

Tree ball draws enormous crowds of supporters who animatedly barrack for their group, hurling insults and jibes at the opposing teams. The sport has even garnered followers among other species. The sport is popular in the Ilelish subsector and those neighbouring it but is played wherever Suerrat have settled.

Performing arts are always a popular pastime where the audience participates in the performance. The works of the ancient Terran playwright Shakespeare have a huge following among the Suerrat, who seem to enjoy being scandalised by the violence the plays feature. Those familiar with the works find little similarity between the original plays and those performed by Suerrat actors as the play moves in unexpected areas with the audience's input.

As Suerrat have a great love of pets, many recreational activities involve them. Taking pets for walks or other forms of exercise is common. Allowing pets to socialise with others of their kind also allows owners to socialise. Attending pet training courses is highly popular and animal racing is widespread and draws huge crowds. As the Suerrat have a high regard for life, the safety of the racing animals is of the highest importance. Such animals are also loved pets – there are no large stables where animals are inhumanely kept and forced to breed in the search of a champion. Interestingly, Suerrat race animals purely for the enjoyment of it and do not gamble on the results.

Suerrat love to dance, and nightclubs and parties are a widely enjoyed recreation, especially among younger members of society. Nightclubs tend to be relatively small but dance parties can be huge affairs hosted within warehouses, stadiums or even in the open air. No matter the venue, they are always crowded with multi-coloured rapidly flashing lights, deafeningly loud music and multiple dance floors. Live performances are the norm, with either live bands, music mixers or a combination. Such gatherings can last for days at a time. Suerrat prefer music which is electronic and has a very pronounced bass. Their music is often described as a mad blend of dubstep, tribal and pop.

Recreational substance use is enjoyed by some Suerrat. They indulge consumption in groups to share the experience, especially when attending nightclubs and dance parties. However, acceptable substances only have a slight hallucinogenic effect and only non-addictive substances are legal.

BUSINESS

Suerrat do not possess any megacorporations. Instead, they have several large corporations which extend beyond the borders of the Suerrat Republic and into the sectors surrounding it which employ other species in addition to Suerrat. Almost all Suerrat businesses are jointly owned by all their employees equally. Employees have a say in how the business operates and share equally in all profits and losses incurred. This business model has been proven to increase employee morale and shows a noticeable increase in productivity. Each employee directly affects the company's fortunes and draws financial benefit from its success.

Suerrat love of nature, as well as a love of novelty, provides many trade opportunities. Many Suerrat businesses within and outside the Suerrat Republic specialise in genetic engineering. Exotic or genetically engineered pets, especially reasonably bright ones, are quite popular. New and unusual pets are always in demand. Exotic plants for the home or garden are also popular trade items. Another area which sees significant input from Suerrat genegineering is the production of biological symbiotes for medical and lifestyle purposes. Symbiotes are bred for various reasons such as enabling individuals to live comfortably in tainted or otherwise uncomfortable environments, producing individuals with abilities they do not naturally possess and providing medical assistance such as manufacturing pharmaceuticals.

While Suerrat have a reduced interest in terraforming worlds for their use, their experience in this field has enabled many Suerrat businesses to provide the service to others. Most companies specialise in a particular style of terraforming, such as using genetically modified life forms, technology assisted alterations and even orbital bombardment to introduce necessary elements into an environment.

Suerrat astronomy, mathematics, environmental and genetic sciences are considered some of the finest and most advanced within the Third Imperium. Scientists specialising in such fields can command very lucrative wages for their services outside the Republic. Suerrat universities offer highly desirable graduate and postgraduate qualifications in these fields for those beyond the Republic who can afford them.

Some major Suerrat corporations include:

Shume Biogenetics: A genetic engineering corporation, Shume Biogenetics is well known both in and outside the Suerrat Cultural Region. All of the corporation's laboratories are located within the boundaries of the cultural region but it has outlets across a broad area of the Third Imperium and its products can be found almost anywhere. Shume Biogenetics specialises in producing and engineering biological symbionts with a broad range of utilities. The most common symbionts the company manufactures assist sophonts in living within tainted atmospheres. Symbionts are designed to filter out a single specific trait and draw nutrition from the host organism directly. These manufactured organisms have found significant favour among those who wish to live within a tainted atmosphere without artificial support but are unwilling to undergo DNA resequencing.

Bikirru Planetary Engineering: A specialist corporation, Bikirru Planetary Engineering designs and implements microbes to assist in terraforming specific worlds. Microbes are individually tailored for the planet they are destined for to transform its unique properties into a world suitable for client needs. The microbes are designed to self-replicate a limited number of times before expiring. The genetic material in the microbes contains corporate identification and will self-destruct if unauthorised attempts at replicating them are made. The corporation has had notable success from broad-scale terraforming of entire planets to micro-engineering projects designed to repair ecosystems from artificially imposed environmental damage.

Dozite-Godu Designer Pets and Companions: A young and upcoming company, Dozite-Godu Pets and Companions are in the business of genetically engineering unique animal companions. Most lifeforms are designed from the ground up based on client briefs. Dozite-Godu have an elite clientele, only those who can meet the exorbitant fees the company charges can afford one of their products. Their engineered products can be found among the rich and famous and several Imperial nobles. Their products draw a significant amount of attention for their owners. Dozite-Godu ensure their products are unable to reproduce and guarantee no two of their products are the same. The genetic coding of all products are closely guarded secrets and individual cells are programmed to self-destruct if interfered with in an unauthorised manner. Dozite-Godu has been the subject of several attempts of industrial sabotage to obtain their secrets but so far all such attempts have failed. A few Dozite-Godu products have been the subject of 'malfunctions' – aggressiveness, not bonding well with their owner and even an attack which cost the owner their life. The company's strong public relations department works exceptionally well in suppressing such 'events' before they become too widely known. Rumours have surfaced recently over Dozite-Godu manufacturing artificial sophont companions but the company has rigorously denied all such rumours.

THE MILITARY

The Suerrat no longer have a single military organisation which protects its interests. In the past, during both the First and Second Suerrat Republics, they possessed both polity-wide naval and army presences. However, these were dispersed first when the Ziru Sirka conquered the Suerrat during the Consolidation Wars and then voluntarily disbanded when the Suerrat joined the Third Imperium during the Ilelish Pacification Campaign.

A ramshackle unified naval and army force was formed during the Ilelish Revolt but these organisations had more in common with terrorist groups than any formal military. Most forces were defeated and captured when the Third Imperium stopped the revolt. A small number escaped and continued to harass the Imperium for a short period after the uprising concluded but the public Imperial stance is that they were steadily hunted down and eradicated.

Individual Suerrat worlds are permitted their own military organisations just as any other world is within the Third Imperium. These may include jump capable vessels. Due to the disruption caused by the Ilelish Revolution, Suerrat worlds are closely watched by Imperial authorities for signs of military power increases which may indicate the potential for another revolt.

LANGUAGE

Suerrat speak their own language, which is used as frequently as Galanglic within the Suerrat Cultural Region. The language, known as Na'ans, appears at first glance to be quite primitive but is highly functional. Na'ans lends itself to the expression of mathematics such as astrophysics and statistics. It has been described as having a logical base that is largely constructed or artificial, a conclusion that is easily proven false. Na'ans' linguistic history can be traced back to the pre-space travel Ilelish and was preserved during the Long Light and into the modern day. Some linguistic drift did occur during the Long Night. Many of the resulting differences were absorbed into the greater language once interstellar travel became commonplace again.

To the outsider, the language is rather harsh, consisting of noises that sound like grunts, coughs and clicks. It uses tone to convey further meaning to words and phrases, making it difficult for those unused to tonal languages to follow.

Suerrat have a single name composed of two parts. The first is analogous to a given name whilst the latter is analogous to a family name. The two parts of the name are used together as a whole. Given names are commonly composed of two syllables and are descriptive in nature, calling to mind aspects or characteristics which the parents wish to be adopted by their child. There is no difference in naming protocols based on the gender of the individual. Example names are Bakur, Hukmotud, Gakak, Oakeden or Pakun. When translated into Galanglic, examples of such names are Brave Warrior, Holy Flower, Dawn Crescent and Mindful Spirit.

The family name is traditionally matrilineal, whereby children are given their birth mother's family name when they are born, followed by a descriptor. Like the first name, this normally consists of one or two syllables and originates in the location or area from which the family was from. Examples include Earit, Iitakul, Tuerak and Kotarol.

This will give a name ranging from four to eight syllables long, such as Gakakearit or Pakunteurak. The name is spoken in full at formal occasions and only the given name in informal occasions. When among close friends it is not uncommon for given names to be shortened even further into nicknames, such as Gaka or Paku.

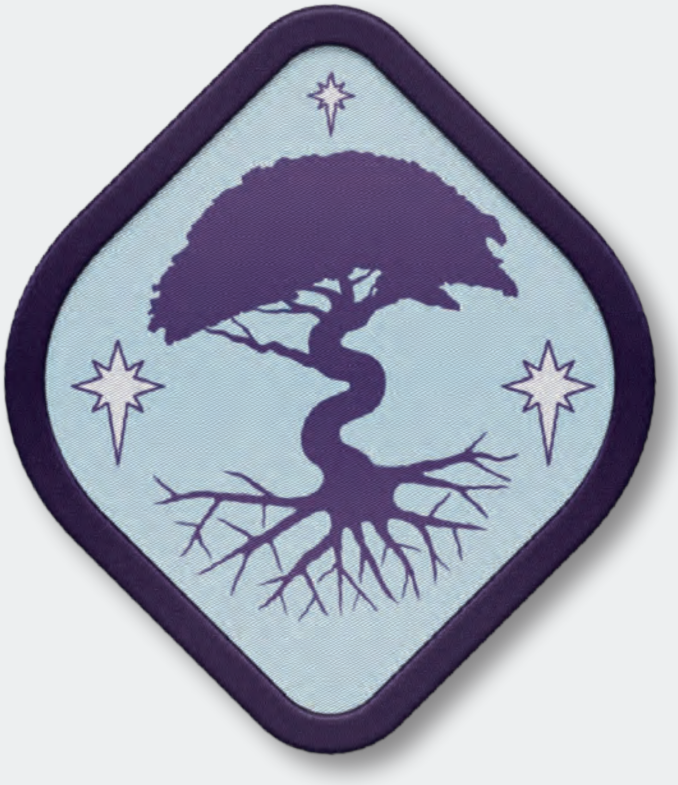
WRITTEN LANGUAGE

The written version of Na'ans takes into effect the use of tone to impart inflection. This has resulted in an alphabet with over 65,000 individual characters or pictographs used in formal documents, poetry, music and science. A simplified version of the alphabet, only using 176 characters, is applied in everyday situations. Nearly every Suerrat within the cultural region can read and write both versions of the alphabet but more reliance is placed on the simplified version outside this area.

THE SUERRAT CULTURAL REGION

In 671 the Suerrat people petitioned Emperor Zhakirov to recognise their culture and establish a Suerrat Cultural Region where they would be afforded a level of autonomy. Their request was not well received by the Moot, with many factions citing the Ilelish Revolt and a fear that any autonomy afforded to the Suerrat would result in another uprising. Suerrat nobles worked tirelessly with Moot political factions to garner support for their request. Other cultural regions, such as the ones afforded to the Geonee and Vilani, were used as precedents.

The petition was finally approved in 674, providing the worlds which were members of the Suerrat Republic during the Long Night limited autonomy to rule themselves. The cultural region would be located primarily within the Ilelish subsector and stretch to include portions of the Miitan, Akkula Worlds, Shudash and Desta subsectors. The powers afforded to the cultural region were maintaining internal peace and security between member worlds, preserving Suerrat culture, protecting sophont rights, advancing interstellar cooperation and being a centre for harmony within the region.



No facility to act as an overseeing government was afforded and all worlds were to retain self-rule. Member worlds had the right to secede from the region's authority at any time. No provision was made to legislate new laws, although the ability to set a uniform policy to direct the entire multi-system region was granted. In addition, the region was forbidden from fielding any of its own military forces. However, the formation of a small interstellar security force is possible, with strict limitations on both the size of the force and the displacement tons of its attached vessels.

THE SUERRAT REPUBLIC GOVERNMENT

The Suerrat were not overly pleased with the restrictions placed on their cultural region but were not about to refuse the limited autonomy they had been granted. They immediately began referring to the area as the Suerrat Republic, although the Imperium does not officially recognise the name. The original member worlds of the previous Suerrat Republic, over two dozen in total, formed a provisional council to oversee the formation of an advising body and invite other worlds in the region to send representatives to speak on behalf of their interests. Most, but not all, of the worlds within the cultural region sent representatives to Dilipuu and began the hard work they had ahead of them.

The first decision made was the formation of the Suerrat United Worlds Council (SUWC) whose powers were limited as stipulated by the Imperium. An election was held among the representatives to select the first Chair, which was awarded to the representative from Ilelish. Discussion was raised over where the SUWC should be headquartered. Both Ilelish and Dilipuu were nominated. Dilipuu proved to be the most popular choice – Ilelish still suffered from the retribution of the Imperium over the Ilelish Revolt and was in no economic position to act as the centre of the Republic. Furthermore, Dilipuu was officially recognised as the centre of Suerrat culture.

Each world within the Republic is permitted to send a representative to act on its behalf. Every world within the council possessed an equal vote but retained the right to issue proxy votes in the event their representative was absent. Decisions put before the UWC required a 75% majority to pass.

The Suerrat Republic has been successful in upholding its charter. There continued to be dissatisfaction with the limited autonomy afforded it but the Republic persisted in petitioning the Imperium for the greater freedoms afforded an autonomous region. Great attention was paid to the Geonee's petition to establish their own autonomous region, hoping to use a Geonee success to aid the Suerrat petition. Empress Margaret's reply to the Geonee in 736 was enough to have the Suerrat withdraw all petitions to form their own autonomous zone.

The Suerrat Republic has little independent power and often acts as a forum for discussion, debate and diplomacy. The SUWC can eject member worlds from its assembly but this has never happened. In its role as a peacekeeping organisation, the UWC can request troops and vessels volunteered from member worlds to be deployed under its purview, and only within the boundaries of the cultural zone, but there has been no need for such action thus far.

The SUWC is funded through 'voluntary' payments of all member worlds. The payment is calculated based on each world's population and economic wealth within the Suerrat Republic. However, the SUWC also receives voluntary donations from large organisations and businesses, both within and without the cultural zone, which value the importance of the council. In addition, some of the wealthier worlds within the region also make voluntary contributions to the council over and above their calculated payments.

The credits contributed towards the SUWC finance its many affiliated specialised agencies, programs and funds such as the Regional Peace Keeping Forces, the Suerrat Republic Scientific Organisation, the Republic Health Organisation and the Suerrat Regional Security Force.

SUERRAT REGIONAL SECURITY FORCE

Since the formation of the Suerrat Cultural Region and the provision of an internal security force, several petitions have been made to the Moot and various emperors to allow the Suerrat Republic to form a navy and army, citing the Geonee Cultural Region as precedent. Unfortunately, the Ilelish Revolt had not been forgotten and there was still concern over providing the Suerrat with the means to attempt to secede from the Imperium. Due to external events, all official requests for further autonomy and independent armed forces were retracted in 737.

Instead, the region is permitted an internal security force. The Regional Security Force (RSF) is a combined anti-piracy and border protection agency. Their primary function is to reduce piracy within the Suerrat Republic but secondarily functions in preventing illegal immigrants into the Republic, upholding both Imperial High Law and the laws of the member worlds and as a customs force.

The RSF is funded through the contributions made to the UWC by its member worlds. Personnel are drawn from member worlds' police and military agencies and individuals who apply to join the service.

Spacecraft utilised by the security forces cannot exceed 500 displacement tons. In addition, spacecraft may have jump capability to assist in upholding their mission of border security. Security assets are organised in a similar fashion to the Imperial Navy – a fleet comprised of taskforces and squadrons – and are based at several worlds within the cultural region. Security Force assets are permitted beyond the borders of the cultural region but may not act in their enforcement role without prior authority from the Imperial Navy, or local authorities when within 100-diameters of an Imperial world.

REGIONAL CRIMINAL POLICE ORGANISATION

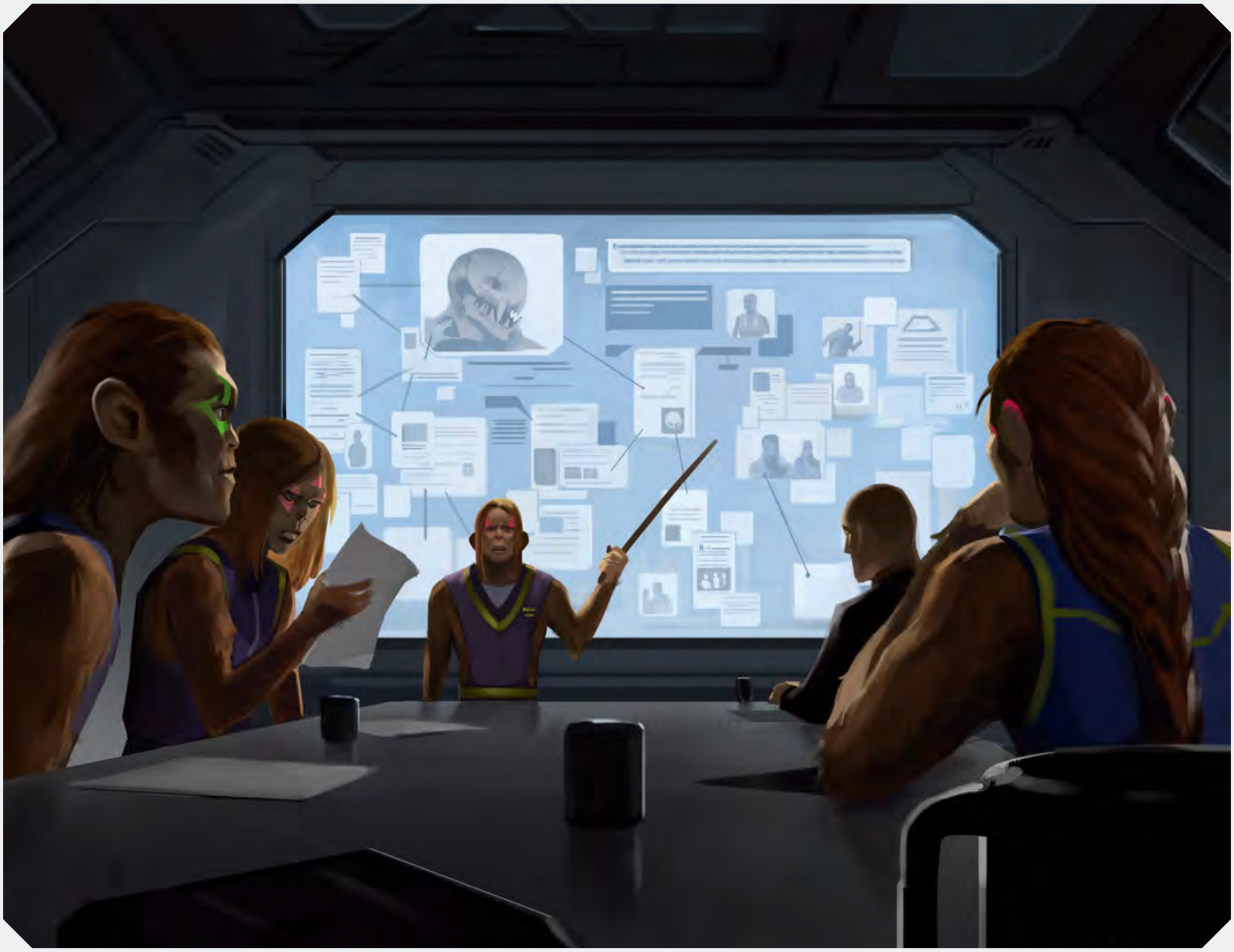
The Regional Criminal Police Organisation (RCPO) is a region-wide organisation within the Suerrat Cultural Region which facilitates interstellar police cooperation and crime control. Headquartered on the world of Spring/Ilelish (Ilelish 3106) it has regional headquarters on all original member worlds of the first Suerrat Republic and agencies on all member worlds of the current Suerrat Republic.

The organisation provides investigative support, expertise and training to law enforcement region-wide, focusing on two areas of transstellar crime – terrorism and organised crime. It has a broad directive which covers drug trafficking and production, political corruption, crimes against sophonts and child exploitation. The organisation fosters and facilitates cooperation among planetary law enforcement institutions through databases and communications networks. Despite the organisation's name, it is not a law enforcement agency. The RCPO is politically neutral and is barred from interventions or activities which are political or military in nature and from involving itself in disputes over such matters.

RCPO functions as a coordination and central database, acting as an administrative liaison between the law enforcement agencies of member worlds. Their extensive databases can track criminals and crime trends throughout the Suerrat Cultural Region, specifically by the authorised collection of fingerprints, retina scans, 3D facial portraits, wanted lists, DNA biometric samples and travel documents. Data is provided to the central database on Spring from its regional agencies and member worlds' criminal databases. The RCPO also maintains strong ties with the Starport Authority within the cultural region, the Ministry of Justice and the RSF to track the movements of known criminals.

Personnel for the RCPO are drawn from law enforcement agencies of member worlds, as well as individuals who apply for service within the organisation.

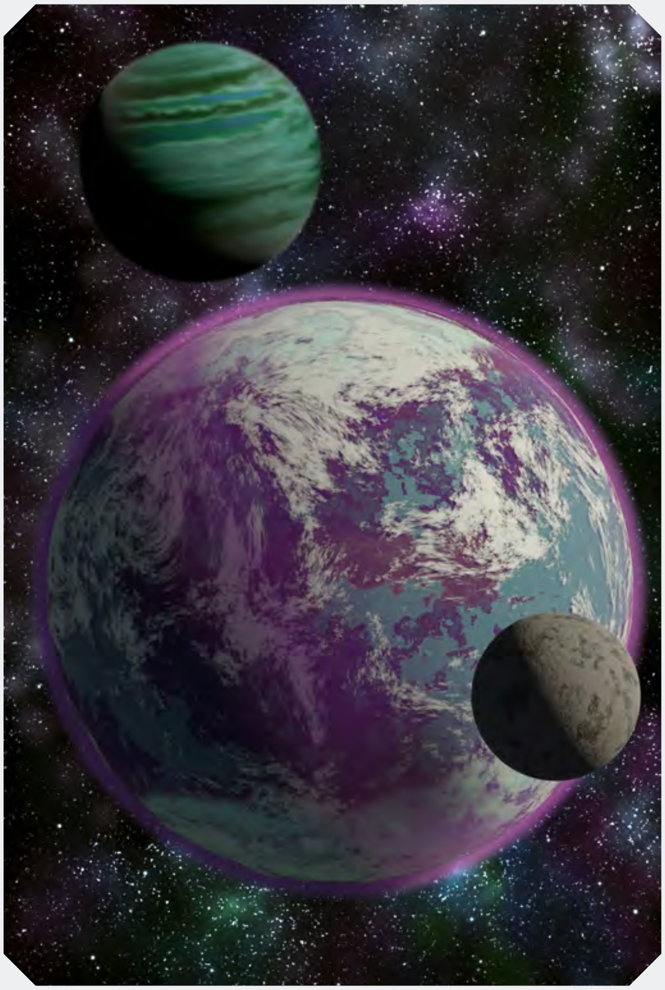
The RCPO is funded through a budget supplied by the UWC from the mandatory payments. Additional funds are voluntary contributions from several worlds within the Suerrat Republic. Funds are used to maintain and improve RCPO equipment, provide training and pay staff. Funds are also used to procure and maintain a fleet of fast courier spacecraft used by the RCPO to maintain communications with member worlds.



THE SUERRAT HOMEWORLD

Ilelish (E674A83-A), located in the Ilelish subsector of Ilelish, is recognised as the Suerrat homeworld. The world is the second of 10 planets in orbit around the Vogut, a M0 V red dwarf sun, residing in orbit at an average of 0.418AU, near outer edge of the habitable zone. Ilelish also orbits within the sun's jump shadow, which ends at 0.511 astronomical units, requiring spacecraft to emerge from jumpspace at the edge of the jump shadow and proceed to the planet via manoeuvre drive. Ilelish has an orbital period of 132 days 3 hours 7 minutes with a day length of 26 hours and 23 minutes.

Ilelish has a diameter of 9,172 kilometres and an axial tilt of seven degrees, resulting in only slight seasonal changes, making for a cool yet pleasantly constant surface temperature averaging 8° Celsius. The short orbital period around Vogut gives Ilelish seasons slightly longer than a standard Imperial month. Large icecaps cover both poles and the planet boasts expansive temperate regions, with small desert and tropical zones.



Ilelish possesses a standard atmosphere comprising an oxygen/nitrogen mix. A strong ozone layer provides significant protection from UV radiation produced by the sun. The atmosphere is tainted with several virulent viruses which can be dangerous to non-native organisms. Symptoms of infection include fever, headaches and joint pain, followed by difficulty in breathing and in the worst cases organ failure and death. Ilelish's native lifeforms, including Suerrat, possess natural immunity to airborne viruses. Visitors require a filter mask to breathe the atmosphere without risk, although vaccinations are available for those who prefer on all worlds within two parsecs of Ilelish as well as the planet itself.

Orbiting at a distance of 269,160 kilometres is Ilelish's only satellite, Komboko, which completes an orbit around the planet every 24 days and 16 minutes. The moon is tidally locked to Ilelish, has a diameter of 2,293 kilometres and has no atmosphere or hydrosphere. Komboko is massive enough to stabilise Ilelish's axial wobble and imparts not insignificant tidal forces on the planet. The moon is heavily colonised, supporting a population of over 26 million inhabitants living in domes and subterranean habitats.

GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Ilelish is a rocky body with a large core made of iron. A strong magnetic field is generated by the rotation of the iron core, protecting the atmosphere from being stripped away by the frequent solar activity from the red dwarf primary. Spectacular auroras can be seen from the northern and southern subsolar points when solar activity is the most active. The iron ore also lends considerable density to the planet, Ilelish has a gravity of 0.75G. The crust is divided into five major tectonic plates and is still geologically active. Volcanism is a relatively common occurrence with between 30 and 40 eruptions each year.

THE ILELISH SYSTEM

The inner system consists of a single hot gas giant in orbit zero and the outer system includes gas giants in orbits two, three and four. Five rocky worlds comprise the remainder of the outer system in orbits five to nine. There are no planetoid belts in the system.

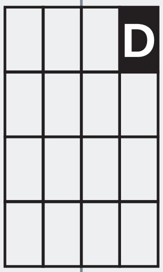
From the surface of Ilelish, the sun appears slightly larger than the star Sol from the surface of Terra. The three closest gas giants can also be visible to the naked eye depending on where they are in their orbits.

The gas giant closest to the sun, Bakap, has no moons. It is a Class III gas giant with clouds consisting of water vapour. It is largely white in colour with a pale blue tint. Unlike the other planets in the system, Bakap rotates counterclockwise. The second, third and fourth gas giants are Class I gas giants with clouds made up primarily of ammonia. They are dirty brown with alternating bands of tan and muddy yellow. Katlek, the second and largest gas giant has five large moons and 47 moonlets. Maklob, the third gas giant, has one large moon and 39 moonlets. It is also orbited by a series of 19 rings consisting primarily of ice. Navop, the system's fourth and outermost gas giant has four large moons and 27 moonlets. Many of the moons and moonlets support large colonies. All the gas giants have significant asteroids in their L4 and L5 trojan points which are heavily mined.

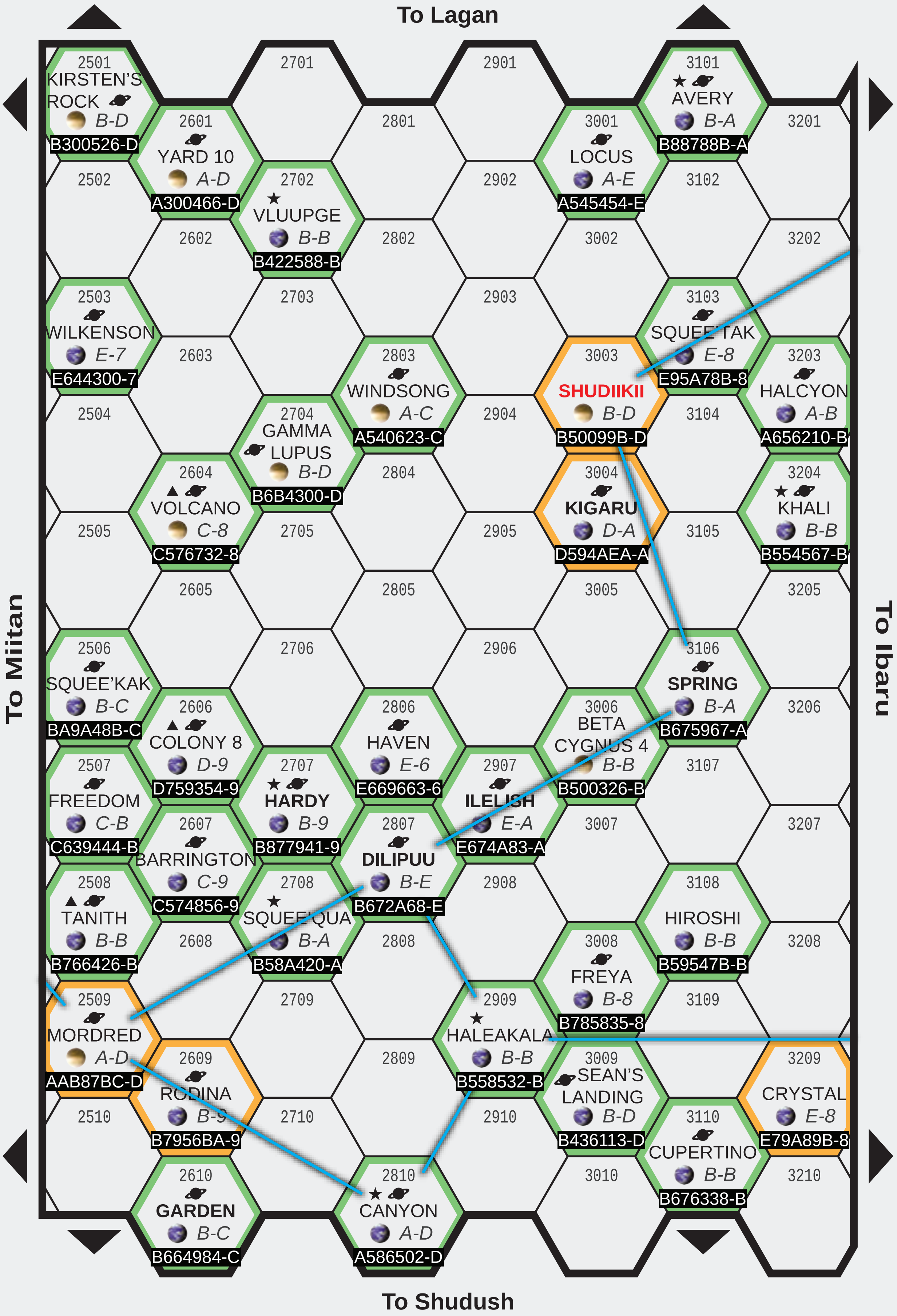
Of the five rocky outer worlds, only Zaklotak and Watok are within the manoeuvre drive limit of the system primary, making the remaining outer planets difficult to reach without using a jump drive or specialised m-drives. Zaklotak, Watok and Patlobat are all small planets. Nakanto is a big world, which is unusual to be found beyond the frost line of a planetary system and it may be a failed gas giant. The outermost planet, Mavoto, is a small world and despite its size possesses a narrow ring comprising primarily of ice as well as two moonlets.

All five outer rocky planets support colonies.

Orbit	Distance (AU)	Type	Name	Notes
Primary	—	M0 V	Vogut	—
0	0.157	Large Gas Giant	Bakap	Diameter: 131,857km
1	0.4	Macro World	Ilelish	E674A83-A
2	0.651	Large Gas Giant	Katlek	Diameter: 141,981km
3	1.03	Large Gas Giant	Maklob	Diameter: 90,176km
4	1.61	Large Gas Giant	Navop	Diameter: 121,845km
5	2.68	Meso World 8754	Zaklotak	Y526001-7
6	4.06	Tiny World 403	Watok	Y000210-9
7	6.58	Tiny World 513	Patlobat	H000401-B
8	10.3	Big World 21270	Nakanto	YDC8030-5
9	16.9	Small World 1823	Mavoto	Y110011-7



ILELISH SUBSECTOR


To Lagan
To Miitan
To Ibaru
To Shudush
2501 KIRSTEN'S ROCK B-D B300526-D
2601 YARD 10 A-D A300466-D
2701
2801
2901
3001 LOCUS A-E A545454-E
3101 ★ AVERY B-A B88788B-A
3201
2502
2602
2702 ★ VLUUPGE B-B B422588-B
2802
2902
3002
3102
3202
2503 WILKENSON E-7 E644300-7
2603
2703
2803 WINDSONG A-C A540623-C
2903
3003 SHUDIIKII B-D B50099B-D
3103 SQUEETAK E-8 E95A78B-8
3203 HALCYON A-B A656210-B
2504
2604 ▲ VOLCANO C-8 C576732-8
2704 GAMMA LUPUS B-D B6B4300-D
2804
2904
3004 KIGARU D-A D594AEA-A
3104
3204 ★ KHALI B-B B554567-B
2505
2605
2705
2805
2905
3005
3105
3205
2506 SQUEE'KAK B-C BA9A48B-C
2606 ▲ COLONY 8 D-9 D759354-9
2706
2806 HAVEN E-6 E669663-6
2906
3006 BETA CYGNUS 4 B-B B500326-B
3106 SPRING B-A B675967-A
3206
2507 FREEDOM C-B C639444-B
2607 BARRINGTON C-9 C574856-9
2707 ★ HARDY B-9 B877941-9
2807 DILIPUU B-E B672A68-E
2907 ILELISH E-A E674A83-A
3007
3107
3207
2508 ▲ TANITH B-B B766426-B
2608
2708 ★ SQUEE'QUA B-A B58A420-A
2808
2908
3008 FREYA B-8 B785835-8
3108 HIROSHI B-B B59547B-B
3208
2509 MORDRED A-D AAB87BC-D
2609 RODINA B-9 B7956BA-9
2709
2809
2909 ★ HALEAKALA B-B B558532-B
3009 SEAN'S LANDING B-D B436113-D
3109
3209 CRYSTAL E-8 E79A89B-8
2510
2610 GARDEN B-C B664984-C
2710
2810 ★ CANYON A-D A586502-D
2910
3010
3110 CUPERTINO B-B B676338-B
3210

★ Imperial Navy Base
▲ Imperial Scout Base

🟩 Secure System
🟧 Amber Zone
🟦 X-Boat Route

B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
● Planet (Water Present)
● Planet (Dry)
● Gas Giant

The surface of Ilelish is dominated by a single supercontinent called Te'Asaat, which girdles the entire planet. Te'Asaat is broken by the Pem ocean and Trare sea in the northern hemisphere and the Sirono sea in the southern hemisphere. The Alutirni sea is a shallow inland sea that straddles the equator, with the much smaller Tauker, Handuu and Lipansho inland seas in the southern portion of Te'Asaat. Finally, the landlocked Nansug sea can also be found in the southern continent. There are two major mountain ranges in the northern hemisphere and two smaller mountain ranges in the southern hemisphere, all of which are tall and rugged. Three deserts can be found on the main continent, breaking up the thick forests found almost everywhere else.

Ilelish has large polar icecaps and glaciation extending down to the subpolar points in some areas. Large portions of the Pem ocean and Trare sea are frozen on the surface.

The equatorial zone has suffered devastating ecological damage due to an Imperial retaliatory bombardment in response to Ilelish's instigating role in the Ilelish revolt. Normally the location of lush wet rainforests, this zone has been reduced to a wasteland comprised primarily of desert and sterilised lands. Rehabilitation has proven difficult as the area has been reduced to bedrock in most places, making it completely inhospitable to most life.

NATIVE LIFE FORMS

Native life on Ilelish is carbon-based using a structure like DNA with four proteins composed of amino acids. DNA structure is akin to Z-DNA, exhibiting a left-handed double helix. All amino acids exhibit left-handed chirality. Due to the amount of stellar activity exhibited by Ilelish's sun, native life risks exposure to elevated levels of radiation causing cellular and DNA damage leading to illness, genetic deformities in offspring and even death. To survive such exposure, all native life except those found in the deep ocean or underground have an abundance of highly effective cell and DNA repair proteins.

Until to 600 years ago Ilelish boasted a rich and diverse ecosystem. Unfortunately, the repercussions of the Imperial bombardment and subsequent biome damage have led to the ecosystem being considerably affected, reducing the planet's overall biodiversity as would be expected from an extinction-level event. Damage mitigation has restored some of Ilelish's biodiversity but the planet's ecosystem may never completely recover.

Plant life is similar to that found on countless other worlds in Charted Space, ranging from simple algae to huge trees and everything in between. Plants on Ilelish do not produce flowers of bear fruit. Instead, some species develop seeds in cone-like structures, while in others seeds develop on the underside of leaves in a manner like spores in Terran plants. Pollen is spread primarily through the air, although some plants have adapted to using animals as pollinators. Due to the dim light from Ilelish's sun, plants cannot rely on chlorophyll to effectively photosynthesise. Rather, plants use bacteriorhodopsin, a black pigment that absorbs as much of the sun's energy as possible. This gives leaves and other photosynthetic surfaces a deep purple-to-black-colouration.

One plant of note is the rhala tree, which once covered up to 80% of the land. It has representative species adapted to almost every climate on Ilelish except for the oceans, ice caps and equatorial wastes. The tree resembles the sequoia of Terran origins. The largest specimens found in the equatorial rainforests had a base trunk diameter of up to eight meters and a height of up to 100 metres. All species of rhala trees develop natural hollows in their trunks which are used by many lifeforms as dens and shelters.

Animal life on Ilelish is varied and complex. Species are divided into three main groups – true vertebrates, pseudo-vertebrates and invertebrates. Most animal life displays bilaterally symmetrical body designs with an anterior and posterior, although notable examples of asymmetrical and radial symmetry exist.

Pseudo-vertebrates are older than true vertebrates, with representatives in tens of thousands of species. Pseudo-vertebrates often possess six to ten limbs which utilise hydraulic muscles for support and movement, along with an external segmented armour comprised of calcium phosphate which acts as a pseudo spine upon which the muscles of the body are attached. In some species, the shell has almost disappeared or become internal. They are inertial homeotherms – able to maintain a stable internal temperature regardless of exterior influence. Pseudo-vertebrates are generally hermaphroditic. Most produce eggs which they lay in mounds, although some species store their eggs inside their body until they hatch, then give birth to live young. Pseudo-vertebrates can be found in many sizes ranging from as small as a mouse to as large as twice the size of Terran elephants.

True vertebrates evolved separately from a shared prehistoric ancestor of the pseudo-vertebrates which diverted hundreds of millions of years ago. These species share several common traits. Vertebrates generally have no external ears and breathe through nostrils located near the front of the head. Specialised vertebrates, including some amphibians and aquatic species can breathe through their skin. All vertebrates have four limbs.

True vertebrates generally exhibit sequential hermaphroditism, meaning they change genders under certain conditions. True vertebrates which live in groups often have only one male who mates with all the females. When the male dies, the dominant female transitions into a male. Animals which tend to live solitary lives turn male once they have given birth and then revert to female after a period of time. This change depends on several factors including temperature, length of the day and the build-up of female sex hormones in the body. Young are almost invariably born female and males are born infertile.

Pseudo-vertebrates and true vertebrates have evolved beaks which consist of a calcium phosphate skeleton covered in tissue. The jaws of both main clades are vertical rather than horizontal as in Suerrat. The beaks of pseudo-vertebrates are uniformly without teeth and kept hidden behind rubbery sphincter-muscled mouths and only extended to eat. True vertebrates, especially carnivorous species, have teeth as well as beaks.

Both major clades uniformly possess four eyes, with one pair larger than the other. The larger pair of eyes are adapted to low light, enabling most animals to see clearly in the reduced sunlight produced by Ilelish's sun. The second pair of eyes are adapted to seeing into the infrared spectrum to a lesser or greater degree. Some species eyes are little more than simple heat sensors, enabling them to differentiate temperature variations in their environments. Others have highly developed infrared vision, allowing them to detect fine details and heat variation.

The ability to see into the infrared spectrum has led to many species using heat variation in specialised skin cells called 'heat spots' to indicate mood and intention. All species can communicate threat, submission and sexual readiness through their heat spots. More intelligent species can communicate greater varieties of emotions through their heat spots, including complex mating and territorial displays.

The ocean and seas, despite their small sizes, show a broad range of biodiversity. Due to the isolated nature of the Nansug sea, it has a unique ecology dominated by pseudo-vertebrate aquatic life. The other large bodies of water are dominated by true vertebrate life, with the most visible being ichthyoids with a finned tail which moves in the horizontal plane as opposed to the vertical like those of Terran fish. Due to the relatively small sizes of Ilelish's bodies of water, ichthyoids do not reach the massive size of analogous species on Terra. Other marine lifeforms include molluscs closely related to pseudo-vertebrates and crustaceans. Colonial lifeforms have not evolved on Ilelish, so there are no analogues to jellyfish or other medusoids. Several examples of land-based pseudo-vertebrates have returned partially or wholly to marine life, filling the ecological roles of whales, dolphins, porpoises and seals on Terra.

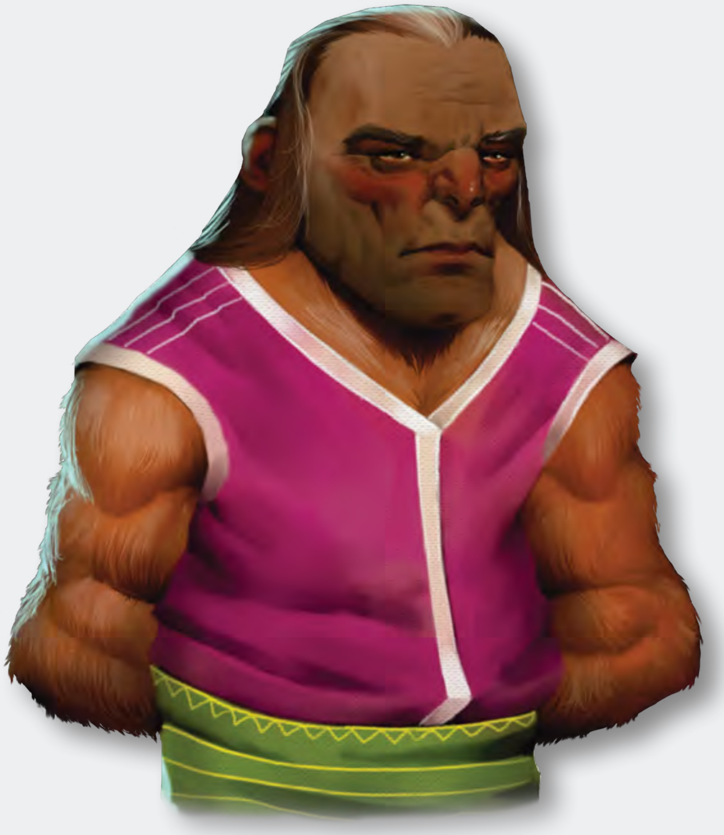
True vertebrates use several different metabolic heating strategies, depending on the species. Primarily endothermic, not insubstantial examples can be found of both ectotherms and heterotherms. Ectotherms are restricted largely to warmer climes.

True vertebrates also exhibit a range of exterior covering including one or more of bare skin, keratin-based scales and a fur-like substance derived from scales. Ectotherms tend to be solely covered in bare skin or scales, while endo- and heterotherms are found with all types of exterior covering.

Avian life has evolved from both true vertebrates and pseudo-vertebrates on several occasions. Regardless of their lineage, none exhibit any feather-like coverings. Instead, they are covered in scales and fur. The wings of true vertebrates are more bat-like in appearance, with skin stretching across one or more phalanges and connecting to the body and legs. Pseudo vertebrate wing structure is composed of hydraulically powered specialised limbs. Avians can be found across all environments on Ilelish from the poles to the equatorial wastelands. A few species have abandoned their aerial lifestyles and live a marine life comparable to the penguins of Terra.

IMPERIAL NOBILITY

As a member world of the Third Imperium, Ilelish holds the estates of two members of the Imperial nobility, who are charged with overseeing and representing their world in the Moot.



Sir Namtarnkepturkit represents the Imperium to the people of Ilelish. He has a small fief outside the capital city of Ne'aa'alu. An Ilelish native, Sir Namtarnkepturkit is an ageing Suerrat of almost 103 standard years old. He has loyally represented the interests of the Imperium to the people of Ilelish since he inherited his title from his mother 56 years ago. During his tenure, he has developed a reputation for being a strong Imperial representative, showing wit and courtesy in the execution of his duties. Unfortunately, his advanced age has led to several infirmities, most noticeable the onset of Suerrat degenerative dementia syndrome, which has no cure. With his declining health in mind, Sir Namtarnkepturkit is considering which of his five children he will pass the title to in turn. His eldest son, Saukumensudsot, believes he should inherit the title but his father feels his son has neither the temperament nor the subtlety to undertake the duties of the knighthood adequately. Currently, he is favouring his second child, a daughter named Baltangmensuddak, to be his named successor as she has exhibited the traits necessary for the role and most importantly has shown no interest in inheriting it.

Count Ishugi Adkhar Diiguusham Gamgursha Enshi represents Ilelish in the Imperial Moot. Ilelish is one of four worlds in the Ilelish subsector the count represents. He has a large estate in the city of Kakane, which he rarely visits, as well as owning several large industrial concerns in other cities on the planet. The title has remained in his family since it was awarded after the conclusion of the Ilelish Revolt over 600 years ago. Count Ishugi comes from a long line of Vilani nobles who can trace their ancestry back to the early centuries of the Ziru Sirka. He became count at 28 on the death of the previous count, his father. At only 33 standard years old, Ishugi has been a count for five years. He has never been satisfied with being 'only' a count and has ambitions to ascend the Imperial noble ladder. Count Ishugi spends most of his time on Capital where he embroils himself in politics, leaving the administration of his estates to underlings. He has successfully manoeuvred himself into several favourable positions and has established a strong relationship with the archduke of Ilelish, all of which he plans to manipulate to improve his noble position. He is currently unmarried but has his eye on Lady Milisene, the daughter and only child of the archduke of Ilelish. Ishugi believes a union between their two houses will place him in the perfect position to vie for the archduke's seat when it becomes available.

STARPORT

Ilelish possesses a Class E starport located just outside of the capital city of Ne'aa'alu. The port is little more than a landing field comprised of a floating platform enough for spacecraft of up to 1,000 tons to land. In addition, two buildings, one dedicated to starport administration and the other to customs are located on the edge of the landing platform. There are no additional facilities available for either ships or crew, although there are several useful services such as convenience stores, hotels, bars, warehouses and workshops available in the star town just beyond the extrality zone.

At first glance, a Class E starport is hardly sufficient for a world with the population and industrial strength of Ilelish. This shortfall is accommodated by several large and well-equipped spaceports located in the larger cities on the planet. While the spaceports do not provide the benefits of those run by Starport Authority, they do provide onsite warehousing, refined and unrefined fuel, ship and crew services, as well as port-side staff to assist with routine maintenance, cargo handling and passenger administration.

TECH LEVEL

Ilelish has a mature TL10, with some areas of technology sitting at TL11. Biological Sciences are at TL11 while genetic manipulation and modification sciences are early TL12. Environmental Sciences are TL10 and are expected to advance to TL11 within 50 years.

GOVERNMENT

Ilelish enjoys a unified world government classified as a Civil Service Bureaucracy. The world's political parties are all closely associated with the ministries and civil agencies running the services they are most interested in. Therefore, socialists run health and transport, greens run the environment and labour runs employment services and so forth. This leads to ministers who have a strong understanding of the agencies they oversee.

Individual ministries and agencies have a pronounced 'personality' of their own – dignified and austere for treasury, regimented for defence, conservative for justice, charitable for health and so forth. Ministers are drawn directly from the agency they oversee through a process of merit with no public electoral process. Policy is agency driven, as each is an expert in the services and portfolios they run.

Individuals who wish to pursue a political career join the agency which interests them, which has the side effect of clearly declaring their political stance. Those who show the right aptitude and skill are promoted through the agency until they are suitable to be considered for a ministerial position.

The government is divided into two levels – regional and world parliaments. Regional parliaments govern local areas while the world parliament governs Ilelish. Regional parliament make laws for their region while the world parliament makes laws for all Ilelish. Regional laws cannot overrule world laws.

New and modified legislation is publicly presented and argued upon within both regional and world parliaments and then voted on by eligible citizens – locally for regional laws and worldwide for global laws. Voting is normally conducted electronically, although provisions are made for other methods for voting on pivotal matters. All Ilelish citizens and permanent residents are permitted to vote once they reach the age of maturity, which is 16, although there is no law which makes voting mandatory. Legislation is passed via a simple majority of 51% of all votes received within a nominated period.

LAW LEVEL

Ilelish has a Law Level of 3. At first glance this may appear rather relaxed but there is little crime on Ilelish compared to other worlds with similar populations. The egalitarian nature of the planetary culture ensures no one is poor or lacking any necessities of life, which is often the source of crime on other worlds. The attitude towards drugs is one of health rather than punishment, which reduces cases of drug related crimes. While the open carrying of weapons is not illegal, there is little need to carry one within cities. Individuals openly carrying weapons in populated areas are often questioned by law enforcement officers regarding their intent.

On most of Ilelish many animals are legally classified as sentient beings, which means any crimes committed against them are treated similarly to crimes committed against sophonts. This equality is for animals which have proven to be self-aware. In a similar vein, pets and animal companions are heavily protected by the law. On most worlds, pets are often seen as property by the law, meaning if they are stolen, injured or killed the crime is considered the same as if perpetrated on any inanimate property. Conversely, on Ilelish, pets and animal companions are viewed as more than property. Specific laws identify crimes against them as separate from inanimate property and protect them as loved and valued lifeforms. The penalty for these crimes is harsh and can include both steep fines and periods of incarceration.

Despite this rather laid-back attitude, crimes such as sedition, treason and revolt are harshly punished. Ilelish still bears the scars of the Ilelish Revolt of the 400s and the legal system is geared towards preventing a reprisal of the era. Therefore, these crimes are punished the most severely, with imprisonment for life being the most lenient sentence for those found guilty.

The legal system in Ilelish assumes all accused individuals are innocent until proven guilty by a court of law and a jury of their peers. Ilelish has a robust legal platform with lawyers to represent those accused of crimes.

Those sentenced to incarceration are provided with intense rehabilitation to enable them to reintegrate into society successfully. Prisons are designed to be comfortable and supportive as opposed to places where punishment is enacted.

MILITARY

Ilelish has a strong military force comprising ground, airborne and space capabilities. Planetary forces comprise 5,000 regiments, 15,000 battalions in total, 1,400 of which are mobile lift infantry, Equipment for planetary forces is top-of-the-line TL10. Elite forces are equipped with TL11 equipment procured offworld.

Naval forces are composed primarily of system defence boats and monitors. The largest vessel in the Ilelish fleet is an ancient Inukerku-class light cruiser purchased from the Imperial Navy when it was superseded by more advanced vessels several hundred years ago. Named the *Tuli'eii Ilelish*, her spinal mount is no longer functional and the jump drive has been stripped out, turning the vessel into little more than a glorified monitor. Despite its reduced functionality, the *Tuli'eii Ilelish* is more than an adequate deterrent to pirates and smugglers.

Of the remaining jump-capable ships in the Ilelish navy, the majority are no larger than 400-tons with only a small handful in the 1,000-ton range.

ECONOMY

Ilelish is a high population, industrial world with abundant resources and a labour force counted in the billions, making it an important world in the Third Imperium. An extremely strong infrastructure supports the world's population and industries, making the movement of individuals and products easy. Primary exports include alloys, weapons, mechanical parts and goods, heavy equipment, electronics, gravitics and information.

An export of note is biotechnology in the form of genetically modified organisms at the early TL12 level of sophistication. Products range from plants and animals modified to flourish on specific worlds to unique pets designed to a client's specifications. Organic symbionts which provide host lifeforms with expanded or additional abilities are also a major export.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of Ilelish is overwhelmingly Suerrat in nature. There are small populations of other species both human and otherwise located in the larger cities, but statistically, their number is inconsequential. Of the other species on the planet, the most numerous are those of Vilani and Solomani descent whose ancestors were trapped on Ilelish during the Long Night. These humans have largely been integrated into Ilelish society and culture, considering themselves Suerrat in all but ancestry.

More cosmopolitan populations can be found in the star and space towns, although even those populations are largely human in nature. Aliens who live permanently around the ports tend to congregate in enclaves where they can enjoy the company of their own people.

CULTURE

As would be expected of their homeworld, the culture of Ilelish is resoundingly Suerrat. While the planet is no longer recognised as the centre of Suerrat culture, as the centre of the previous two Suerrat Republics it still exemplifies gregariousness, the importance of family, the equality of all citizens and the spirit of cooperation.

Even so, an air of sadness pervades the culture of Ilelish. The world's environment has been deeply damaged by the Imperium, with some areas never likely to recover. Thousands of species of native life have been rendered extinct and while there have been successes in recovering some of those lost species through importation from populations transplanted on other worlds or through de-extinction programs, many have been lost forever.

Along with the air of sadness is one of wariness of the government and authority. Suerrat blame the damage done to their homeworld not on the Imperium which inflicted it but on the short-sightedness of the government of the day. Ilelish natives do not have great trust in their politicians, leading to a huge proportion of the population being strongly interested in politics. From an early age, children are educated in the political process and their role in ensuring a repeat of the Ilelish Revolt does not occur. The right to vote and make their voice heard is deeply ingrained in Ilelish culture, leading to Ilelish having the largest percentage of voters among all the worlds of the Suerrat Republic.

The Suerrat of Ilelish also have a tendency towards preservation and future-proofing, another ramification of the Imperial Retribution. In remote locations around the world, deep underground and even in orbit, secure vaults have been constructed to house the genetic material of every animal and plant on Ilelish as a failsafe should another extinction event impact their world. The vaults are regularly updated with new genetic material as it is discovered, keeping the data as relevant as possible. They are heavily protected, both physically and by law, to ensure no harm comes to them.

URBANISATION

Ilelish has a population of 28 billion. With such a high population, there is an obvious conflict between urbanisation and preserving the ecology. The people of Ilelish have taken on this challenge successfully in several ways. In the wastelands on the equatorial zone are 12 arcologies, each housing over a billion inhabitants without impacting the environment. Each arcology works at returning the lands around it to their original condition. Unfortunately, little success has been achieved due to the extent of the damage. Where they have failed outside the archologies, they have succeeded within. Many areas within each arcology are dedicated to natural environments. Here can be found the otherwise extinct equatorial giant rhala trees and the microenvironments they support.

Smaller cities, some with hundreds of millions of inhabitants, are located beyond the wastelands and oceans. These cities have been built to complement the environment around them with minimum impact, with strict regulations and harsh punishments for transgressions. Cities are densely populated in order to have the smallest footprint possible and the boundaries between urban development and wilderness are blurred. Structures within cities utilise living rhala trees where possible, incorporating the natural hollows the trees produce into their structures. Where this is not possible or practical, structures are built on gravitic platforms beside trees so the impact on the surface environment is minimised. Structures are predominately circular, both wrapped around tree trunks and free standing. Foot traffic is restricted to balconies and bridges between the trees. Vehicular traffic is gravitic and restricted to above the treeline.

The laws on Ilelish strongly protect the environment. Harsh punishments are enacted on polluters and those who damage the ecosystem. Therefore, all industries which produce environmentally damaging pollution are not located planetside. Instead, such industries are located on the moon or in orbital manufactories where pollution has little chance of impacting the planet. Furthermore, the mining of basic resources is also illegal on Ilelish. Mining is instead undertaken on the other planets and asteroids in the Ilelish system.

PLACES AND EVENTS

Ilelish has hundreds if not thousands of areas worth visiting, without even mentioning the multitude of festivals celebrated across the planet. Some of the most popular are mentioned here but these are only a tiny sample of what tourists can find.

Komboko: Ilelish's only natural satellite Komboko is a significant population centre and tourist attraction. The main settlement Tureau'otar is a huge domed city over 12 kilometres in diameter. The entire area under the dome is dedicated to a jungle reserve, one of the few places in the system where living tropical rhala trees and the virtually extinct aginkam can be seen, along with hundreds of other lost species. The reserve is kept as natural as possible in the hopes of one day using it as a source to return the lost equatorial ecosystem to Ilelish. Beneath the jungle, a city has been built deep into the crust of Komboko, which houses in excess of 10 million inhabitants. Much of the city's economy is based on recovering extinct species and returning them to the wild. Hundreds of large biospheres are located throughout the subterranean city where both animals and plants are prepared for their return to the wild on Ilelish below.

Ne'aa'alu: Located deep in the Tete'imaser temporal forest, Ne'aa'alu became the capital of Ilelish after the previous capital in the equatorial zone Masakes was destroyed during the Imperial Retribution. A huge metropolis with a population exceeding a billion people, Ne'aa'alu was constructed in harmony with the surrounding ecology. Towering skyscrapers embrace majestic rhala trees while gravitic platforms support buildings which could prove harmful to said trees. The city is an excellent example of Suerrat construction techniques. The air above Ne'aa'alu is chaotic with gravitic vehicular traffic, all of which is controlled by Artificial Expert Intelligence (AEI) to prevent collisions. Apart from the sheer beauty of the city, there are several tourist attractions well worth visiting. The Penikauka'an building, where the Ilelish government sits, is a beautiful example of early Itas period architecture. The I'eekruaka'an Museum is probably the best on the planet and holds innumerable relics from all of Ilelish's historical periods. A few short kilometres beyond the city is a rhala tree thought to be the oldest example of its species. Estimated at an incredible 1,900 years old, the tree is a tourist destination which draws both Suerrat and other sophonts alike.

Rotukeneu Oi'erasaasur: In a band along the equator of Ilelish lies the Rotukeneu Oi'erasaasur – translated as the plain of retribution and despair. The plain is a 2,000 kilometre wide area of blasted wasteland, rendered sterile in 435 as punishment for Ilelish's pivotal role in the Ilelish Revolt. The surface of the plain was blasted down to the raw bedrock by orbital bombardment, exterminating everything which lived in the area including the ancient rhala rainforests from which Suerrat civilisation sprung. The bombardment ejected three trillion tons of dust and ash into the upper atmosphere, surrounding the planet and plunging it into a nuclear winter lasting almost a quarter of a century. When the dust and ash clouds finally cleared, Ilelish was in ruins. Countless animal and plant species were lost, and entire ecosystems were destroyed. Despite their work in trying to restore the Rotukeneu Oi'erasaasur over the last 700 years, little progress has been made. The area is considered a very costly reminder of what the greed of politicians and revolt against the Imperium cost Ilelish. The site has almost religious significance to the Suerrat, serving as a stark warning against putting too much trust in the hands of those in power.

Maaa'irani'ar Enisud: Found on the Tiaka'etam Plains, the Maaa'irani'ar – singing stones – are a collection of stone monoliths grouped in concentric circles of decreasing size. The purpose of the stones and who constructed them are a mystery but scholars believe they predate Suerrat recorded history and perhaps even the arrival of Suerrat on Ilelish. The monoliths are carved from basalt rock mined over 100 kilometres away, brought to their current location and stood upright. Carved to look vaguely humanoid, they are largely hollow and have openings at irregular points along their length. When the wind blows through them, the monoliths generate an eerie keening which can be heard up to 16 kilometres away.

Dilipuu University of Biological and Environmental Sciences, Ilelish Campus (DUBESIC): This is a well-respected university which has surpassed its parent campus in many ways. Boasting the very finest of facilities and equipment, DUBESIC draws talented and promising students and staff from across the sector. The facility maintains a Tech Level in the biological and environmental fields in the low TL15, which far surpasses any similar facility on the planet. Graduates of DUBESIC are highly valued in the biological and environmental fields, often finding lucrative employment far from the Ilelish Cultural Zone.

Ki Aa Kagiik Ikiishilshgiger: More of an observance than a festival, the Ki Aa Kagiik Ikiishilshgiger – Night of Tears – commemorates the retribution inflicted on Ilelish at the end of the Ilelish Revolt. It is observed every Imperial year on day 289. Suerrat across Ilelish gather in open areas with friends, family and community members, performing a silent vigil while candles are lit. The candles represent the glow from the orbital bombardment which rained down destruction on the equatorial zone. During the vigil, the candles are sent aloft in flimsy sky lanterns or set afloat on tiny rafts. The Night of Tears is a sombre and reverent event which brings many observers to tears for the great loss suffered by the people of Ilelish.

Mudimzinii Akla Iun: Celebrated on the first day of spring on Ilelish, the Mudimzinii Akla Iun – Spring Fertility Festival – acknowledges the return of the season of spring and the promise of new life. The festival traditionally begins by watching the sunrise. This is followed by parades of brightly clothed participants accompanied by live music. The parade is a wild and chaotic event that includes adults and children. The parade and observing crowd tend to mingle and mix, making it difficult to determine which is which. The parades lead to a playful free-for-all where participants throw small pouches containing multi-coloured powders at each other, leaving them covered in pigment. Finally, the festival ends in fairs where food and live entertainment can be enjoyed.

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

Many of Ilelish's native lifeforms have been transplanted to other worlds, making them quite common in the subsectors surrounding the Suerrat Cultural Zone. Some have even made their way as far as the Spinward Marches or the Domain of Gateway. An interesting note regarding the animals native to Ilelish is their size – megafauna is common on the planet. Despite their size, animal life is rarely as durable as similarly sized animals due to the planet's lower gravity.

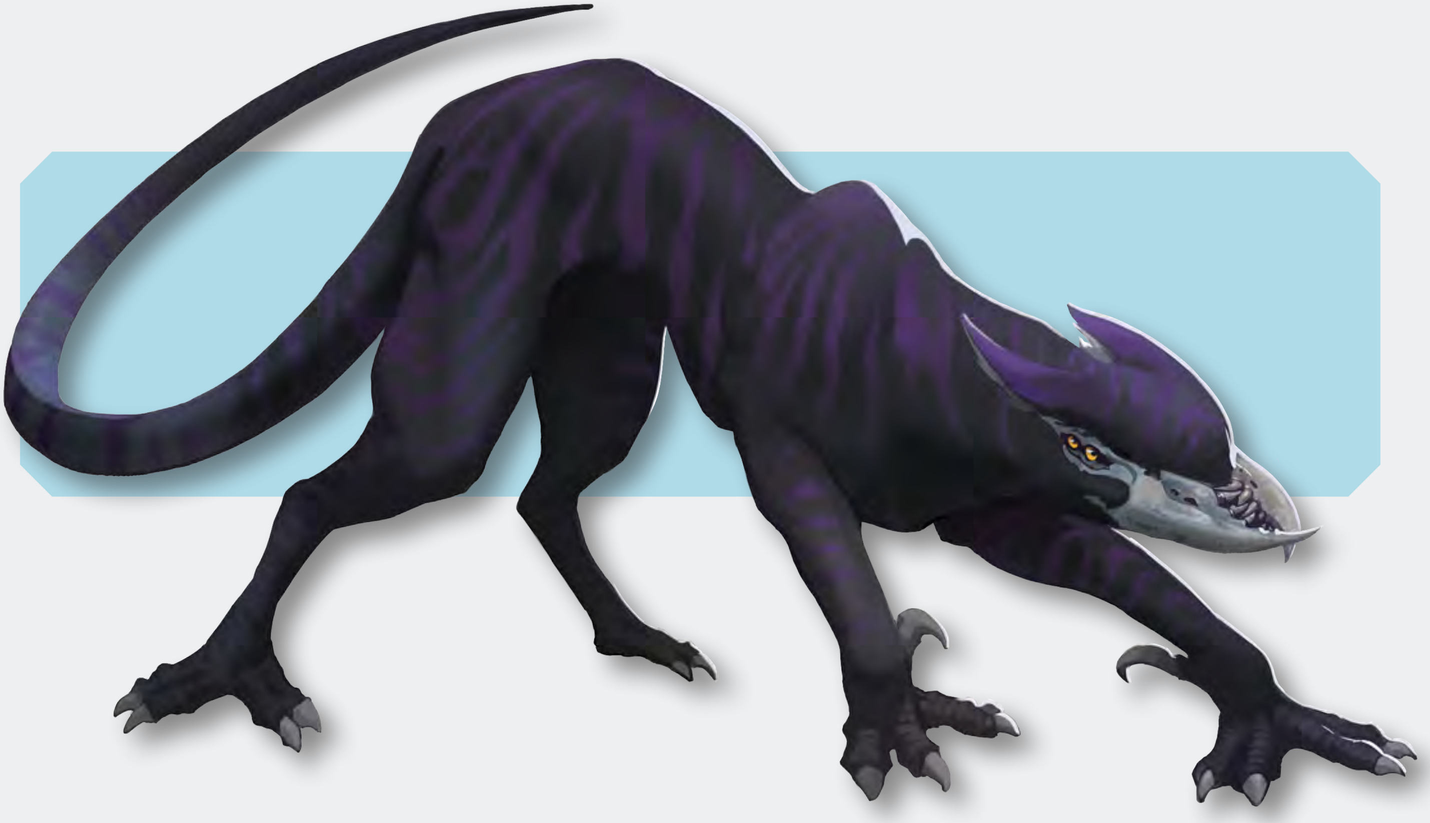
Aginkam

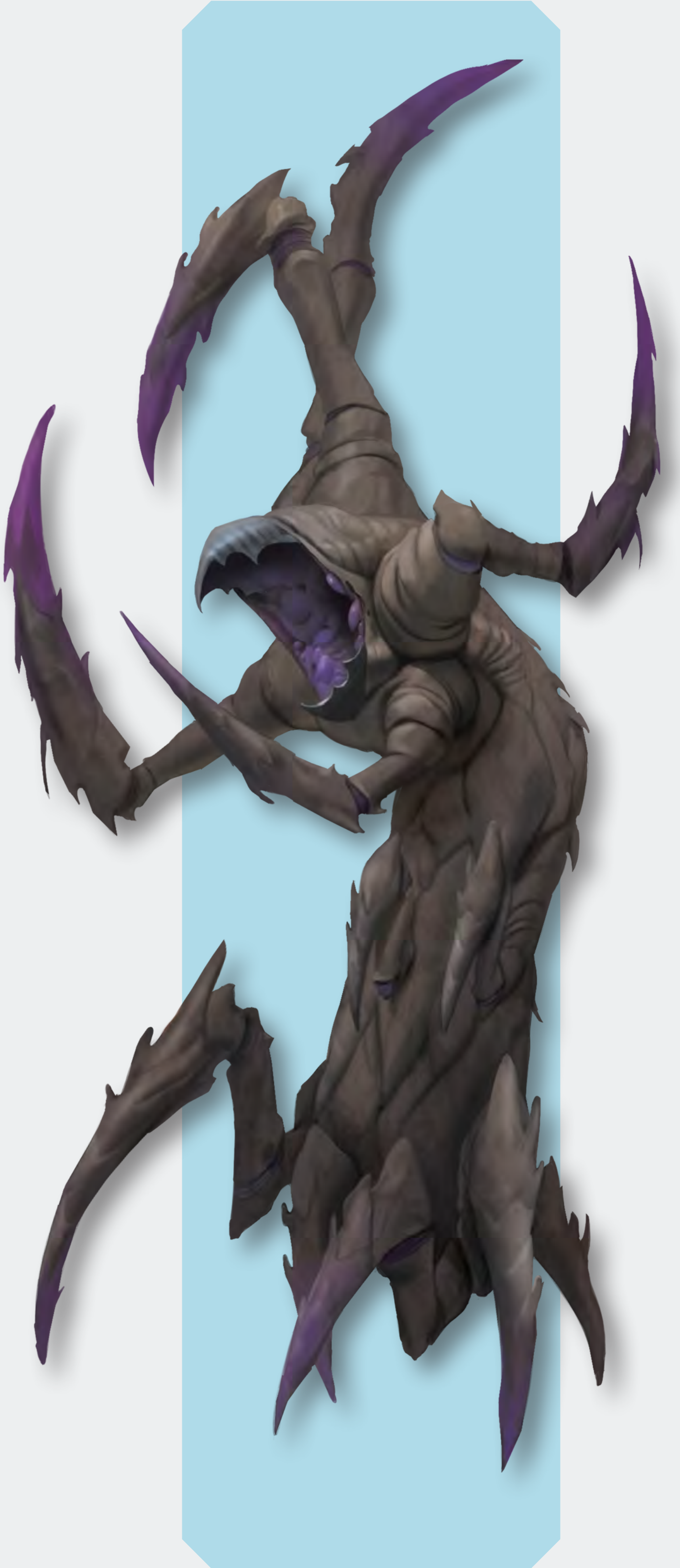
Aginkam are highly successful true vertebrate predators of the iteoka species which can be found in every climate. Cooperative arboreal predators, they are adapted to live in tropical rhala trees, forming a symbiotic relationship where they protect the tree and in return shelter in their natural hollows. Since the devastation of the equatorial zones, aginkam are no longer found in the wild on Ilelish. Adults can achieve lengths of 3.5 metres and weigh 300 kilograms. Their fur is black with deep purple stripes and spots to aid in camouflage while hunting. The head is long with four eyes set far back along the skull. The jaw has a heavily toothed beak that can open extraordinarily wide to the sides.

Superbly adapted for hunting in trees, their four legs end in four-toed claws which are divided into two mutually opposable groups which can be used to grip branches tightly. On each forepaw is a large sickle-shaped claw which extends from the wrist. Held up whilst climbing, the aginkam can bring the sickle-claws down in a slicing motion when attacking prey, causing deep wounds which bleed profusely. A long thick tail aids in balance while climbing or leaping, athough it is not prehensile. While supremely agile in the trees, aginkam are somewhat clumsy on the ground.

Aginkam are ferocious hunters and highly territorial. Adults organise themselves into prides consisting of two to twelve unrelated individuals. Only a single dominant pair of individuals breed. Young are born in litters numbering one to five and are immediately capable of climbing onto their mother's back and clinging to her fur. They grow quickly and roam away from their mother at one month, at which point the other females in the group share in their rearing. The young spend the next three months learning to hunt, after which they are driven off to find groups of their own.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Aginkam	13	12m
Skills	Athletics (dexterity) 3, Athletics (endurance) 2, Melee (natural) 3, Recon 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2	
Attacks	Bite (2D), Sickle-Claws (1D+3)	
Traits	Camouflaged, Heightened Senses, Fast Metabolism (+1)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Chaser	





Gagluki

Gagluki are sessile pseudo-vertebrates found in the forested savannahs of Ilelish, where trees grow less closely together, allowing the passage of larger animals. An adult gagluki can reach a height of 20 metres. When young, the species are swift and savage mobile predators, attacking anything smaller than itself. As they approach maturity, gagluki seek each other out to mate. Once mating has occurred, the gametes are stored in the body and the creatures separate to find a location in the forests which has a copse of lareri trees. When a suitable location is found, they bury the bottom half of their body in the sand, using their lower limbs to anchor themselves in place and begin a semi-metamorphosis.

The upper part of the body, including the head and upper limbs, sit upright and rapidly put on weight. The shell which covers the back extends to cover the entire body. The upper limbs move further up the body, growing longer and developing an extended shell ending in a sharp point, whilst the head recedes into the body as the eyes degenerate. After six months of rapid growth, gagluki resemble a dead lareri tree with a wide trunk and five leafless spike-like branches radiating from the top which they use to spear unwary animals which approach them. Captured prey are lifted to the jaws, now located between the upper limbs, and swallowed whole.

Gagluki grow continually and have long lifespans, often living longer than 150 standard years. Young are born in large litters and are mobile and completely independent immediately after birth. They quickly separate, as stronger youths frequently prey on their weaker siblings.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Gagluki	91	—
Skills	Athletics (strength) 2, Deception 3, Recon 1	
Attacks	Spike (7D)	
Traits	Armour (+8), Heightened Senses, Large (+6)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Siren	

Migukas

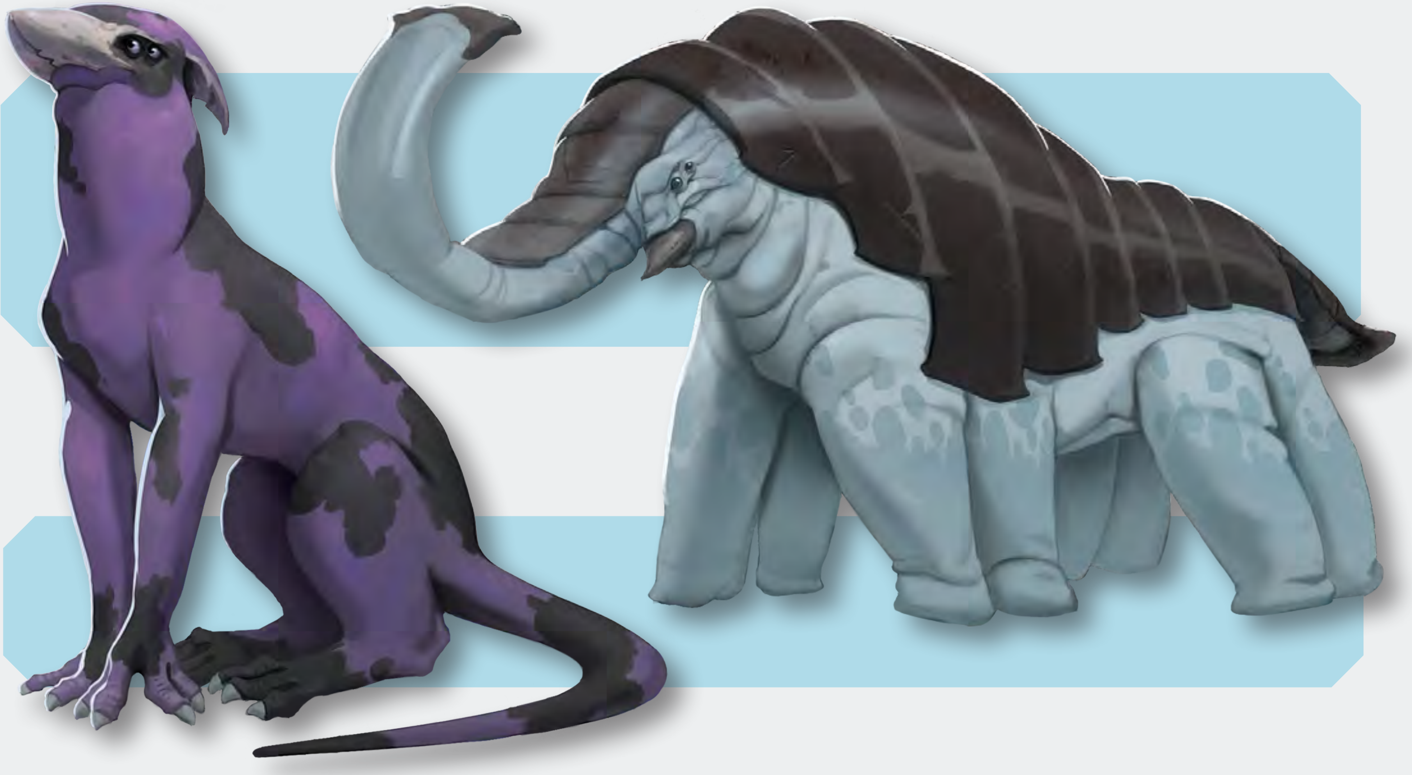
Migukas are descendants of the aginkam and the first species domesticated by prehistoric Suerrat. Due to their long association with Suerrat, migukas have been selectively bred into many domestic varieties favouring various behaviours, sensory capabilities and physical attributes. Migukas breeds vary widely in shape, size and colour. The sickle-claws found in their ancestors are largely missing in migukas except for those varieties used for hunting. Migukas perform many roles for Suerrat such as hunting, herding, protection, companionship and therapy. Over their period of domestication, migukas have become adapted to Suerrat behaviour, forming close bonds with the owners.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Migukas	7	12m
Skills	Athletics (dexterity) 2, Melee (natural) 1, Recon 3, Stealth 2, Survival 0	
Attacks	Bite (1D), Claws (D3+1)	
Traits	Heightened Senses, Small (-1)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Pouncer	

Nishma

Nishma are large pseudo-vertebrate herbivores which dwell on the forested savannahs of Ilelish. Adults can grow as large as 10 metres long and eight metres high at the 'shoulder', weighing in excess of 50 tons. They gather in herds of 8–10 adults and any young still dependent on their parent. A thick shell covers their back while eight thick jointless legs support their heavy bodies. Their mouth can be extended on a trunk-like appendage to reach either ground-level vegetation or leaves high up on trees. They also use their heavy weight to push trees down to bring vegetation within reach for their young. Nishma roam over large areas, constantly on the move as they feed. The species lay small clutches of eggs which they guard until they hatch. The young remain with their parent for 13 years, after which they leave to find an unrelated group to join. Newborns are vulnerable to predators, so adults become aggressive in protecting them.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Nishma	110	6m
Skills	Athletics (strength) 2, Recon 1, Survival 2	
Attacks	Trample (7D)	
Traits	Armour (+5), Heightened Senses, Large (+5)	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Intermittent	



Keshim

Keshim are large solo apex predators who prowl the forested savannahs. A true vertebrate, the keshim is one of the few Ilelish predators which is bipedal. These massive animals can grow up to six metres in length – including a two-metre tail – standing over four metres tall at the shoulder and weighing in excess of four tons. Their strong legs end in three wickedly clawed toes which can propel them at a maximum of 32 kilometres per hour for short bursts covering 500 metres. A thick tail helps to counterbalance their heavy head which is armed with a wide beak full of 10-centimetre-long serrated teeth.

Keshim bodies are covered by short thick fur, which is coloured deep purple to aid it in sneaking up close enough to prey to run it down. On the sides of their necks they sport long tufts of thick fleshy bristles. During the mating season or as threat displays, the bristles become engorged with blood and flush bright blue and red.

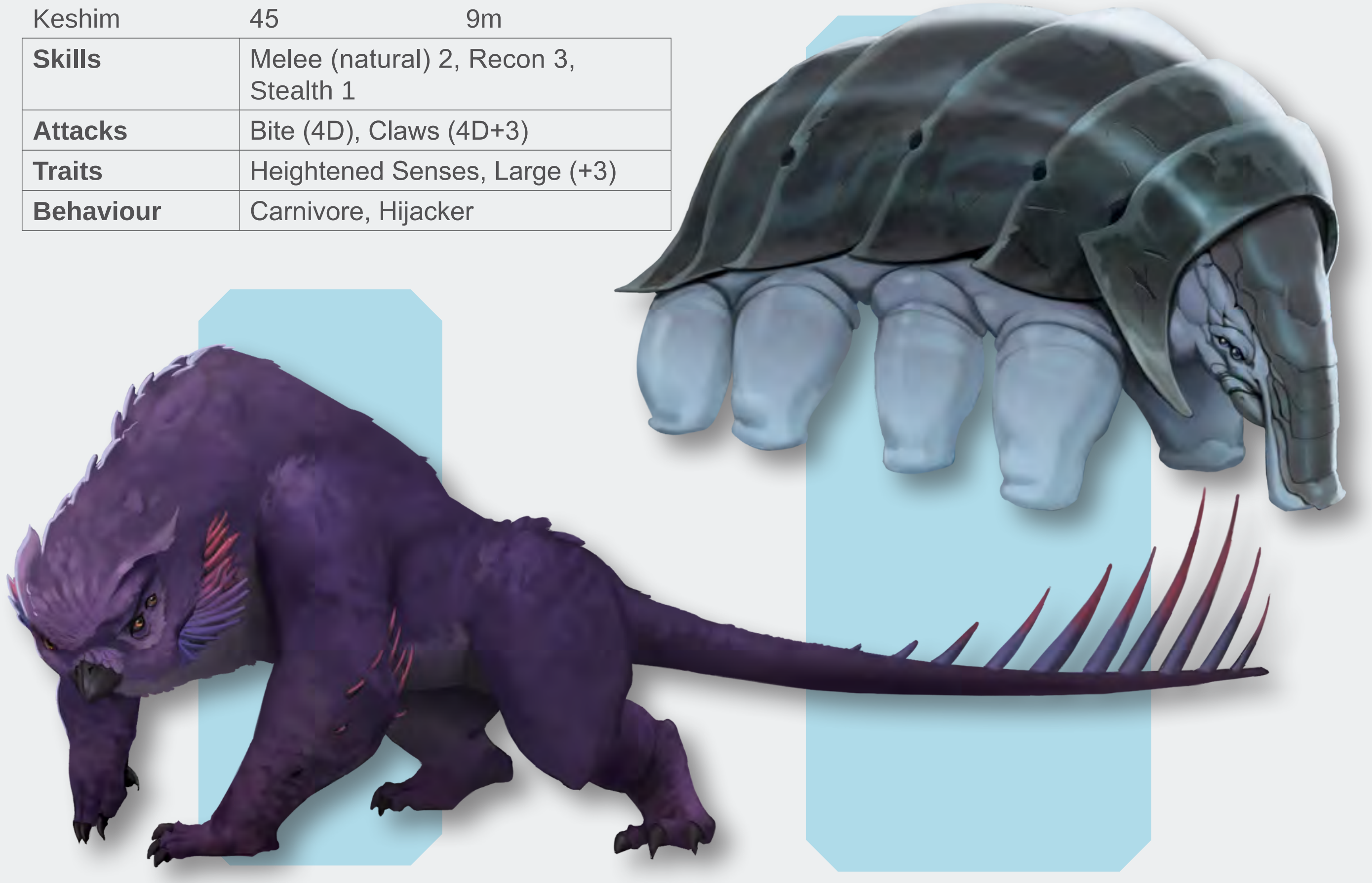
Young are born live and relatively helpless, requiring close care from their parents before they can fend for themselves. Keshim normally mate for life and rarely take another partner if one is killed.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Keshim	45	9m
Skills	Melee (natural) 2, Recon 3, Stealth 1	
Attacks	Bite (4D), Claws (4D+3)	
Traits	Heightened Senses, Large (+3)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Hijacker	

Shudu

Shudu, a smaller species of nishma, are found in semi-tropical rivers and wetlands. A pseudo-vertebrate, shudu stand 2.5 metres tall at the shoulder and weigh in excess of 900 kilograms. Their eight legs are jointless but enable them to be surprisingly agile for such large animals. Their back and top of the head are protected by an articulated shell and their jaws have elongated into a shovel-like structure used to collect the floating plants they feed on. Short tusks grow from their shell alongside their jaws used to defend themselves. Shudu lay eggs which they guard until the young hatch. Young remain with their parent until they reach maturity. Shudu move in herds, relying on numbers as a protective measure against predators, although they become aggressive when protecting young.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Shudu	45	6m
Skills	Athletics (endurance) 3, Recon 0, Survival 1	
Attacks	Tusks 3D, Trample 4D	
Traits	Armour (+5), Heightened Senses, Large (+3), Slow Metabolism (-1)	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Grazer	



SUERRAT HISTORY

PREHISTORY

In -315000, the Ancients arrive on Terra and collect a group of hominids to be used as pets and servants. Transported to Ilelish, the hominids are settled in the vast jungles of the equatorial regions and the Ancients began a program to genetically alter them to survive their new home better. They make their feet semi-prehensile and strengthened their arms and grip to aid in brachiating. The Ancients manipulate the genes responsible for hair growth, giving the hominids a silky pelt of fur to keep them warm in the colder climate. Finally, they strengthened their cell and DNA proteins to better resist the mutating effects of Ilelish's sun.

The Ancients abandon Ilelish in -300000. Before departing they remove almost all evidence of their presence on the planet and destroy what they cannot remove. They also release the Suerrat they kept as servants and pets into the wild. Left to fend for themselves without the Ancients' oversight and having none of the advanced tools they were familiar with, the Suerrat, naturally predisposed to arboreal life, take to the trees. They soon learn of the natural hollows in the rhala trees but discover many of the hollows they wish to use as shelter are protected by the native dog-like aginkam. Savage competition ensues between the Suerrat and aginkam for this valuable shelter.

By -260000, some aginkam adapt to the presence of the Suerrat in their hollows; allowing the hominids to share in their shelter had certain benefits such as access to food and improved safety. Over the next 5,000 years, the aginkam which live alongside the Suerrat diverge from their wild ancestors into the domesticated migukas. Suerrat find the migukas to be valuable companions, providing warmth, protection and assistance in hunting.

Suerrat populations grow and spread. By -85000 groups have populated the entire equatorial jungle regions and begun to spread along the Sirono and Trare coasts, taking their domesticated migukas with them. Expansion continues into the savannah forests beyond the equator. They continue to spread into the thick temperate forests by -60000 and reach the shores of the Pem ocean by -50000.

Agriculture develops around -28000. Agriculture is first restricted to simply collecting the seeds and spores of wild plants which lived as parasites on the limbs and trunks of rhala trees and planting them in more convenient locations. Suerrat gradually learn to plant the seeds and spores of plants which provided greater harvests. In time, this behaviour led to the understanding of simple selective breeding and the domestication of the giiraste, nuslah and halsuu plants – the three grains which formed the basis of wide scale food production and led to the birth of civilisation.

Around -18000 the Suerrat learn to mill seeds and spores to create flours, from which bread could be made. For the first time enough food was being made to allow some members of society to focus on other endeavours, resulting in early skill specialisation.

THE FIRST CIVILISATIONS

Almost simultaneously, in historical terms, three civilisations emerged in -14000; the Nipikians settled on the shores of the Lisgamag river in the area which is now known as southern Sigiim, the Kushidamians in the Shamkirku valley and the Gennismas on the sheltered Raalah river delta on the Trare sea. The rivers provided two main advantages to the development of these civilisations, with water to irrigate fields and offering the easiest method of transport for societies without paved roads.

While isolated from each other, the three civilisations grew rapidly and prospered. The increase of available food brought about by farming and agriculture produced a surplus which enabled some members of society to specialise in other tasks. The cooperative nature of the Suerrat led to the early development of democracy and the joint responsibility of decision making.

THE BRONZE AGE

In -13500, the neolithic tribes on the banks of the Zuruarl river discover how to manufacture bronze, heralding their advancement to early TL1. Over 100 years, the knowledge of bronze working has been shared amongst the scattered tribes along the river, improving their ability to hunt, farm and defend themselves. It is not known whether contact with the Nipikians inspired the first civilisation of Zukarlak or it was the discovery of bronze but by -13400 the tribes living on the Zuruarl river combine into a unified and sophisticated culture. Over the next 1,000 years, the Zukarlak civilisation with its three large cities of Gisurk, Mighiish and Kilakkhan spreads over an area larger than Nipik and Kushidam combined.

Also in -13400, a distinctive civilisation develops centred on the Nansug sea. The bays and inlets of the rugged coastal region and the many small islands strung across the sheltered sea combine to make the area ideal for trade and the sharing of cultures. Beginning on the island of Tase'at, civilisation spreads across the area, both on land and via water. Water transport experienced rapid development, going from simple rafts to canoes, catamarans and then simple sailing craft in only 200 years, assisting the Tase'at civilisation in controlling the vast Nansug sea.

On the eastern shores of the Pem ocean, the Laminkir civilisation begins in -13000. This spreads along the ocean's shores and quickly develops the boating skills to travel into deeper water and allow them to settle on both sides of the Pem ocean. This leads to contact with the Gennismian civilisation. First contact results in several small confrontations but both peoples quickly resolve their differences and trade commences between the two civilisations.

In -12600, the distinct Tare'at civilisation comes to a sudden and unexplained end. Approximately 300 years later a robust seafaring people known as the Rutkin become extensive traders. Ships again sail across the Nansug sea and contact many Suerrat groups which had been forgotten by the fall of the Tare'at. There the Tasko, Kaian and Tamlom seafaring civilisations rapidly develop and soon join the Rutkin as traders.

By -12000, the major Suerrat civilisations had contact with each other. Regular trade develops from one end of the continent to the other. With trade comes the sharing of ideas and discoveries, along with religious beliefs and the concepts of egalitarianism and democracy. Each civilisation continues to spread and invariably encounters other less sophisticated Suerrat. Contact with such groups is generally friendly, although occasional hostilities still occur.

AGE OF DISCOVERY

By -10500, the Suerrat discover iron. The discovery heralds a period of unprecedented scientific progress aided by extensive trade routes throughout the civilised Suerrat world. In less than 200 years, the Rutkins and Tamloms on the Nansug sea and the Laminkirs on the Pem ocean develop sophisticated sailing craft as the Gennismas develop the printing press, bringing their societies into early TL2.

Over the following 300 years, scientific advancement continues as discoveries spread throughout the various Suerrat nations. By -10000 Gennismas experience their industrial revolution, bringing them to TL3 and making them the most scientifically advanced culture on Ilelish.

GLOBAL CIVILISATION

The industrial revolution spread quickly across Ilelish, bringing a significant change in Suerrat culture. Cities grew quickly, putting a strain on the local environment. Mass production of goods meant cities could support more individuals, which allowed schools and universities to become available to the masses. Travel becomes faster and more convenient using coal and steam, allowing Suerrat to explore more of their world and encounter primitive tribes which are rapidly introduced to more advanced technology. In less than 100 years, Suerrat civilisation spans the globe.

The leap from an agricultural society to an industrial one proves to be more than the environment can handle. The demand for coal increases exponentially with time, requiring forests to be cut to produce the fuel. The need for coal sees more land cleared to make way for mines. Pollution from the soot and smoke produced from coal burning causes even more environmental damage. Soot covered the leaves of the trees the Suerrat still lived in, preventing them from receiving the light they need to photosynthesise and resulting in them dying in alarming numbers. Soot dirtied the river systems, changing their pH values and leading to the death of fish as well as more trees. The soot rising into the atmosphere caused acid rain, which increased the acidification of the waterways and seas, leading to the death of even more of the Suerrats' beloved natural environment.

At first, the convenience brought about by using coal and steam led the Suerrat to overlook the damage it caused. The environmental damage continued to take its toll, leading to homelessness, illness and food shortages. Social unrest quickly followed, forcing the governments of the world to explore alternatives to the use of coal as an energy source. Vast public finances were poured into university coffers, enabling them to initiate numerous research programs into alternative energy sources. The use of wind and water to generate power was explored with success. With the discovery of electricity, the rate at which scientific discoveries were made accelerated.

The increased funding to universities enabled other sciences to benefit, leading to breakthroughs in medicine and food production. By -9700, the Suerrat reached TL6. Technical and scientific advancements such as the solar panel enabled the Suerrat to have multiple forms of renewable energy production which generate little or no pollution. Projects to repair or reverse the environmental damage caused to their planet were undertaken with success. Pollution was still an issue and would continue to be so if the Suerrat could not find a way to meet the needs of a technological society without damaging their environment.

THE SPACE AGE

Early forays into the orbital space of Ilelish were achieved in -9787, setting Suerrat sights on a greater achievement – exploring their moon. By -9785 the Suerrat launch their first unmanned probe using chemical rockets to orbit their moon, followed by a crewed expedition in -9783. The expedition was so successful that additional missions were sent to the lunar surface where valuable resources were discovered. The first moon colony was established in -9760, with more built in the following years. By -9750, the Suerrat had established eight lunar colonies, five of which were mining settlements causing the lunar population had exceeded 10,000.

With the success of the first moon launches, advancements in rocket propulsion continued along with the establishment of staffed orbital satellites followed by manufacturing facilities. Chemically fuelled probes were sent to explore the other planets in the Suerrat solar system. Suerrat dreamed of colonising the other planets in their solar system but the time it took to reach those planets in crewed vehicles made the endeavour unreasonable.

In -9742, Suerrat scientists successfully split the atom. The development of nuclear power increased the feasibility of space travel to other planets in the near future.

By -9700 the Suerrat had achieved TL8. Following soon after in -9689, thermonuclear-powered propulsion was invented. Using chemical rockets to take off and land on Ilelish allowed vessels to traverse the distance to other planets in a fraction of the time previously required. Journeys which took days were reduced to hours, while those taking years now took months.

Much of their pollution-causing manufacturing was performed in orbit, while the initial moon mining colony had grown to a population of a million. Ilelish was connected by a vast global network allowing almost instantaneous communication and data access anywhere. In the following decades, crewed exploratory missions were sent to the moons of Katlek and Maklob to establish the first commercial offworld mining colonies. Chemical rockets were completely replaced with magnetic launch systems, allowing for environmentally friendly launches and re-entries. Most space vehicles were either built in the orbit of Ilelish or on the surface of the moon.

Advances in medical sciences see Suerrat lifespans increase beyond anything they had ever been. Genetic sciences reduce the dangers of space travel as well as eradicating many diseases which had previously plagued Suerrat with death or disability. Nuclear fission technology has advanced to the point where smaller and safer generators could produce the same amount of energy as the much larger generators of a decade or so prior.

Over the next 200 years the Suerrat colonised their solar system, establishing settlements on dozens of moons, exploring the gas giants and discovering valuable ore heavy asteroids in their Trojan orbits. In -9585, the Suerrat send unmanned probes to the nearest extra-solar systems. Using thermonuclear-powered pulse propulsion units able to accelerate craft to 10% of the speed of light the journey would take the probes nearly 40 years to reach their destinations and almost another four years before any communications by radio would be received. The Suerrat were not dismayed by how long it would take before they heard anything. They knew building vessels capable of taking colonists to new solar systems would be a daunting task and used the time it would take to hear back from their probes to make a start on the massive undertaking.

By -9550, the population of Ilelish is seven billion. The solar system had been largely explored and served as home to 50 million living on asteroids, moons and other planets.

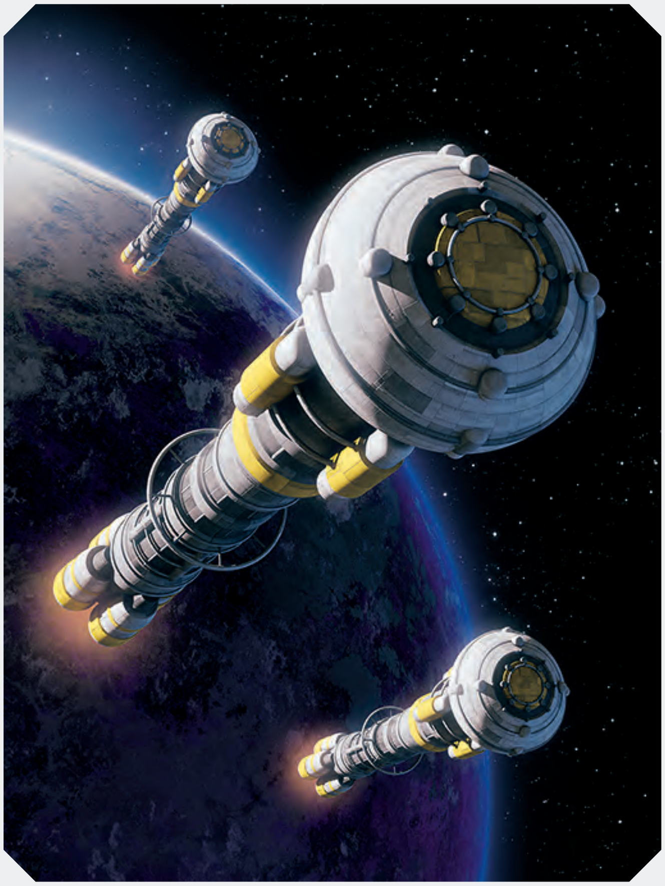
TO THE STARS

In -9541, the Suerrat receive radio broadcasts from the probes sent to the three stars within one parsec of Ilelish. Two probes report the discovery of planets capable of supporting life in the habitable zones of their stars. The first two colonies, called 'slowboats' were already constructed and five more were in various stages of completion.

The slowboats are over a kilometre long and designed for an initial crew of 200. Room on the boat was provided for the population to increase through births to 2,000 colonists during the journey. The addition of self-sustaining closed environments allowed the inclusion of the nucleus of an entire ecosystem. These slowboats were designed to spin on their long axis to produce artificial gravity when not under thrust.

In -9534 the first two slowboats are launched. The first is sent to the star the Suerrat called Eritlep (Ilelish sector 3006). The second is sent to the Dilipuu (Ilelish sector 2807).

In -9500, a breakthrough discovery in gravitics power takes the Suerrat to TL9. The discoveries provide an unprecedented improvement in propulsion technology through reactionless thrusters, doing away with the need for vessels to carry vast quantities of reaction mass and only requiring enough fuel to power the thrusters for the extent of the journey. These vessels could achieve 20% of the speed of light.



Advancements in magnetic technology in -9497 allowed the colony vessels to be equipped with ramscoops in their bow, enabling them to collect hydrogen from the interstellar medium to fuel the powerplant. Enough fuel would be needed on board for the ship to achieve the velocity required for hydrogen collection to begin but, once it was reached, the ships had an endless supply of fuel.

During the next 600 years, the Suerrat colonised more than two dozen star systems. By -8900, this federation – The Suerrat Republic – was linked by gravitically-propelled ram-scoop slowboats travelling at more than 50% light speed.

The discovery of habitable worlds which were not quite perfect for Suerrat comfort led to further increases in the sciences of biology, chemistry, genetic and planetary engineering. The Suerrat preferred colonising planets that were as like Ilelish as possible but, when confronted with less habitable worlds, they were happy to undertake terraforming projects to make the planet more suitable.

During this time, the Suerrat had not met another technologically sophisticated species. While they hoped they would one day have such a meeting, they were beginning to believe they were the only advanced culture in the galaxy.

THE VILANI

In -8100, the Suerrat were finally contacted by another advanced civilisation. A Vilani exploratory trader arrived at Squee'tak on the edge of the Suerrat Republic. The Vilani possessed a drive system the Suerrat had never heard of which allowed the Vilani to travel faster than the speed of light. After arduous talks, the Vilani agreed to trade the secret of jump technology to the Suerrat for their advanced medicines and biological products. The Suerrat and Vilani became close trading partners. The Vilani attempted to convince the Suerrat to join their growing empire but the Suerrat politely refused.

The initial interactions between the two polities were pleasant but in time grew coldly cordial and strained as the Suerrat continually refused to join the Ziru Sirka. The Republic and Empire remained at loggerheads, pressure building until the situation would soon explode after -5400 with the commencement of the Consolidation Wars.

The Suerrat, being a peaceful people, had no use for warships, so they were woefully unprepared when a Vilani fleet arrived in -5390, demanding their total submission to the Ziru Sirka or annihilation. The Suerrat resisted with what few vessels they could quickly arm but it soon became apparent there was no way they could defend themselves against the might of the Vilani. In -5470, the Suerrat sued for peace and the Vilani demanded the dissolution of the federation and their absorption into the Vilani empire as a condition. The Suerrat had no option but to agree.

Almost immediately the Suerrat found themselves living under Vilani law, forced to adopt Vilani customs and having no choice but to accept a Vilani governor and thousands of Vilani immigrants onto their worlds. The Suerrat bitterly resented the nature of Vilani rule and the systematic destruction of their culture and beliefs. Pockets of resistance grew on many planets which were once members of the Suerrat Republic, causing civil unrest and sabotaging Vilani interests to make their worlds less attractive to their alien overlords. Unfortunately, the result of their unrest was the exact opposite of what they intended.

The Vilani were not prepared to tolerate any Suerrat uprisings. In retaliation, worlds were placed under tight military rule. Entire Suerrat populations were forcibly removed and relocated to other worlds under strong Vilani control. The slightest hint of dissent was met with swift reprisals, mass arrests, incarceration and, at times, summary execution. Suerrat culture was outlawed and they were forced to accept the Vilani way of life with no exceptions. Over the ensuing centuries, Suerrat culture was essentially eradicated, only kept alive by word of mouth and hidden caches of literature.

The darkest hour in Suerrat history had arrived. They would remain under the harsh rule of the Ziru Sirka for over 3,000 years before they had the chance to free themselves from the Vilani's suffocating yoke.

THE INTERSTELLAR WARS

The long series of wars collectively known as the Interstellar Wars began in -2404 when a Vilani trade convoy in the Bernard system was fired upon by Terrans for ignoring traffic control signals. The Terrans believed an attack was imminent and destroyed some of the vessels. The resulting war was a small affair limited to only a few systems and ended in -2396 but the Terrans formed a unified government during this period.

News of the conflicts arrived in Ilelish a little over three years after the conflict began but the war was so far away it had no impact on the Suerrat apart from them cheering on a species standing up for themselves against the Ziru Sirka. The impact of the Interstellar Wars would not affect the Suerrat for almost another 200 years.

More conflicts took place over the next 2,000 years as the Terrans chafed at the perception of being pinned down by the Vilani. Tensions would boil over into full scale war more than nine times, with territory won and lost by both sides. As the core of the Ziru Sirka was far from the arena of conflict, few reinforcements were sent. Vilani governors were content to 'buy off' the Terrans by granting them control over a few Imperial worlds in exchange for brief periods of peace.

In -2262 the Terrans defeated the Ziru Sirka soundly using advanced technology. Although the war was officially declared over, hostilities between the Terran Confederation and the Ziru Sirka continued, often exacerbated by the distance communications had to travel before commanding authorities could react. In -2228, news reached the Suerrat on Ilelish of an approaching Terran fleet. They used the alarm caused by the news to wage their guerrilla war to disrupt the local Vilani war machine. The conflict spread throughout the space once controlled by the Suerrat Republic. The ferocity and success of the uprising saw Vilani fleeing from Suerrat worlds by the millions. Those who did not or could not flee were offered the chance to surrender peacefully and accept Suerrat sovereignty or safe passage. Those who chose to continue to resist the Suerrat were dealt with accordingly.

By -2224 the Terrans were victorious at the Battle of the Three Suns. The Suerrat had disrupted the Vilani so much they were able to declare their independence from the Ziru Sirka and ally themselves with the Terran Confederation. While many rich and influential Vilani abandoned the planets they had grown to consider their own, many of the poor remained as they could see opportunities to improve their lives under the new Suerrat government. These Vilani were integrated into Suerrat society and permitted to maintain their traditions and culture as long as they did not try to force their ideology on the Suerrat.

Some Suerrat joined the Terran Confederation in ships they had obtained from their Vilani overlords, joining their new allies in taking the war to the core of the empire. Whilst the conflict continued, Suerrat worlds underwent a revival of Suerrat culture. Vilani-built cities were razed to the ground and the land was rejuvenated and rehabilitated to its original conditions. Where huge swathes of rhala tree forests had been destroyed to make way for cities, new trees were planted. The return of the rhala forests saw the return of the native ecologies and the Suerrat went back to living amongst the trees as their ancestors once did.

In -2215, the Ziru Sirka were no longer able to resist the continuous confrontations with the Terran Confederation and her allies and declared their surrender. The news of the fall of the Ziru Sirka was met with joyous celebrations by the Suerrat but their joy soon mellowed when they discovered they had traded one overlord for another – the new Rule of Man.

THE RAMSHACKLE EMPIRE

The Terrans proved far more relaxed in their oversight of the Suerrat than the Vilani. The Suerrat were permitted their own customs and traditions, and trade continued with their interstellar neighbours. The lack of experience in overseeing worlds shown by the Terran governors provided opportunities for Suerrat advisors to offer guidance in how they were ruled. In fact, the Terran governors were glad of the assistance they provided.

Unlike many of the worlds in the Ramshackle Empire, most Suerrat planets prospered during this period. Once the local governors realised the benefits of their oversight obtained from native advisors, they were happy to allow them as much autonomy as they needed to govern themselves short of independence from the Rule of Man.

It was only a matter of time before the poor governance administered in other sectors of the Rule of Man was felt in Ilelish. Poor administration led to economic downturn, recession and finally depression. Inflation soared, making even the cheapest products outrageously expensive. Suerrat worlds which required interstellar trade to feed their populace found the price of importing food too expensive. Widespread famine soon followed. Interstellar trade slowed, imperceptibly at first, but soon it was impossible to overlook. Word reached the Suerrat worlds of Terran governors being recalled from the frontiers to the core of the empire, leaving those worlds to fend for themselves. It was clear the Rule of Man was crumbling.

THE LONG NIGHT

The collapse of the Rule of Man did not occur all at once but by -1776, after just over 400 years, the empire was no more and its member worlds were left to fend for themselves. Shortly after the fall, the Suerrat restored their old republic government and worked hard to return economic security to their sphere of control. Suerrat traders ventured out beyond the borders of the republic and assisted in maintaining ties to the greater interstellar community.

At first, the Suerrat Republic stood as a shining beacon in the darkness of the long night – a source of advanced technology, food and medicine. For many worlds in the area the Suerrat were the only thing standing between sustaining what they had and a collapse to barbarism, or worse.

Despite the Suerrat's best efforts, the lack of broader interstellar trade began to exact a horrible price on the former worlds of the Ramshackle Empire. Science and technology regressed gradually at first but then with alarming acceleration. Worlds found they no longer had the capacity to manufacture advanced technology, forcing them to rely on more primitive options. With the loss of knowledge came the inability to maintain what technology remained. The Suerrat turned to cannibalising parts from broken down ships to repair others which were still functional. Slowly, one-by-one, the worlds of the Suerrat Republic forgot the knowledge of the jump drive.

All was not lost however. Despite the drop in technology, the Suerrat still had the ability to build slowboats, just as their ancestors did. As the broader reach of faster-than-light travel diminished, the enormous Suerrat slowboats again began plying the space between stars. The Suerrat Republic had dwindled but remained a faint glimmering hope in the darkness of the Long Night.

By -163, the technology in the Suerrat Republic had stabilised at an average of TL8 and on some worlds even began to improve slowly. Interstellar trade, while painfully slow compared to centuries earlier, still prevented some knowledge and technology from regressing too far. In the outskirts of the Ilelish system, an experimental accident led to the rediscovery of jump technology. This monumental event heralded the return of faster-than-light travel to the Republic. Starships reached out from Ilelish spreading the reacquired knowledge to all the worlds of the Republic, seeing a rapid increase in economic growth and prosperity.

Expeditions beyond the boundaries of the Republic discovered what had once been previously advanced worlds were now populated by little more than warring barbaric tribes. On some worlds, populations had died out completely. On other worlds, the Suerrat were greeted with open arms, the populace eager to recommence trade and share technology. The Suerrat were content in sharing their knowledge of the jump drive amongst themselves but were hesitant with others. They remembered the yoke of control they had been subjected to in the past and were not about to provide the potential means to a return of such. Like the Vilani had restricted knowledge of jump-2 to others, the Suerrat kept the jump drive to themselves.

THE THIRD IMPERIUM

Unknown to the Suerrat, two sectors away in the Core, Cleon I founded the Third Imperium and took the Iridium Throne. With strong leadership the Imperium grew rapidly and in -70, first contact was made with the Suerrat Republic. The representatives of the Third Imperium came bearing gifts and promising more if the Suerrat would join them. The coming of the Third Imperium was greeted with reservation by the independent-minded Suerrat. Some welcomed the new opportunities for travel, trade and commerce, while others feared a return to the oppression of the Ziru Sirka.

Initial talks between the two polities proceeded for a decade, with no ground given – the Suerrat Republic was not prepared to sacrifice its sovereignty to the Imperium and the Imperium were not content to allow an uncontrolled polity within its borders. Late in the year 80, talks broke down. In 81, the Third Imperium founded the Ilelish Domain and launched a pacification campaign to bring the Republic into its fold. Admiral Jahid Diinsakhar and Archduchess Arda Bukdikam led the campaign, the former commanded the combat forces whilst the latter was in overall control of the new domain. Together, the two made a formidable force.

The Ilelish Pacification Campaign lasted 14 years. Apart from the Suerrat Republic, the remainder of the domain fell easily to the Third Imperium. Most of the region was fragmented and disorganised as a result of the Long Night, so little resistance was offered. In fact, many worlds welcomed the successor to the Rule of Man. By 96, only the Suerrat Republic stood against the Third Imperium claiming the entire domain.

Despite being enemies, Admiral Diinsakhar could not help but be impressed by the organisation and tactics of the Suerrat opposition. Even with inferior forces, the Suerrat were able to present reasonable resistance to the Imperial Fleet. Despite their tenacity, Suerrat forces ultimately proved no match for the Third Imperium. In 105, after suffering considerable losses, the Suerrat Republic sued for peace. Talks concluded quickly with the dissolution of the Suerrat Republic and the admission of worlds into the Imperium. Such was the respect the Third Imperium held for the organisation of the now defunct republic, Ilelish was made the capital of the sector and the Suerrat diplomat Natiruhker was ennobled and raised to the position of Ilelish Sector Duke.

Governing an entire sector was no easy task for the new and inexperienced duke but his diplomatic ties placed him in a good position to know he needed to surround himself with people he could rely on. Natiruhker's calm demeanour and ambassadorial outlook ensured a prosperous reign and secured the ducal seat for his family for generations to come.

THE ILELISH REVOLT

Over the next 400 years, the Suerrat flourished. Many emigrated far from the borders of the old republic, settling as far away as the Solomani Rim and the Domain of Gateway. Suerrat merchants traded far and wide, bringing advanced Suerrat biological and pharmaceutical products to the Imperium. New Suerrat colonies were established, often on worlds other species disregarded as inhospitable and uninhabitable. These worlds were quickly subjected to Suerrat terraforming techniques which would, in decades or centuries, make them habitable and heavily populated, bringing them firmly within Suerrat control.

The Imperium continued its outward expansion, concentrating on increasing the number of worlds under its authority. As expanding its frontiers was the Imperium's highest priority, meeting the needs of its member worlds fell somewhat lower on the list. Neglect soon led to economic depression as funds were channelled into the expansion effort.

After decades of neglect, the high population worlds of the Ilelish sector – led by Ilelish – began negotiations in 399 with the central Imperial government for the establishment of an autonomous region in the sector. The population centres uniformly felt greater control over their interstellar trade was the key to profitability. Emperor Martin III refused.

Although the precedent of the League of Antares existed, Martin III and his advisers saw no pressing need to relinquish Imperial authority to relieve economic depression within the empire.

In 418, radical separatists took control of the Ilelish government and declared the world's independence from the Imperium. The separatists encouraged other worlds in the area to join them in independence. Within a year, 12 other high population worlds joined. By 420, the revolt had spread to six subsectors.

Martin III acted by imposing a blockade around the insurgent territory. Squadrons were mobilised from throughout the Imperium in order to fill the siege lines. As the noose drew tighter, the density of ships in the line increased. As each world fell to the siege, the inevitability of Imperial victory became stronger.

The Imperium was patient in its campaign. It minimised its losses by avoiding confrontations. At the same time, its overwhelming fleet force made confrontations rare. Instead, the revolt was slowly and carefully ground down.

The last world to fall was Ilelish itself. When it did, in response to a demand for unconditional surrender in 435, the Imperium destroyed the starport and mandated the evacuation of all populations in the lush equatorial zones before sterilising the flora and fauna. Almost 700 years later, the equatorial zone of Ilelish remains a sterile desert. The capital of the sector was shifted to Dlan (Ilelish sector 1021), a high population world which remained loyal to the Imperium throughout the siege.

CHANGED DIRECTIONS

The Suerrat were once more members – albeit somewhat distrusted – of the Imperium. They were still trying to improve their position among the stars by colonising any remaining planets in the Ilelish and Gushemege sectors. One of those was Hillaladi (Gushemege sector 2438), a desert planet which had previously been considered worthless due to its inhospitable climate. The Imperial Moot decided to oppose this new Suerrat expansion. Rather than using the techniques of brute force which had quashed the recent Suerrat insurrection following their sector-wide rebellion, they instead opted to out-compete the Suerrat in the colonisation of Hillaladi. To accomplish this, they realised they could not compete with the Suerrat's advanced terraforming techniques. Instead, they geneered the Jonkeereen, a new human subspecies – one which would be adapted to the desert environment. Ironically, the result would be a species of humans at least as alienated as the Suerrat and possibly as rebellious, if recent events are any indication.

In 637 the Suerrat accepted they were no match for the might of the Imperium. They abandoned their terraforming of desert worlds as a direct result of the success of the Jonkeereen Project.

SUERRAT CULTURAL REGION

In 671 the former worlds of the Suerrat Republic made another bid for autonomy by petitioning for the area to be designated a Suerrat Cultural Region. The region would encompass the former territory controlled by the republic and afford the Suerrat a level of autonomous control.

The Imperial Moot debated the petition, concerned granting Suerrat worlds any amount of autonomy would ultimately lead to another attempt at secession. The debate lasted several years, during which time Suerrat nobles called in political favours and secured enough proxy votes to ensure success when a vote was called. In 673, a motion was finally moved to vote on the Suerrat Cultural Region and it was a success. Taking the Moot's decision into account, Emperor Zhakirov provisionally granted the Suerrat their cultural region in 674.

The formation of the Suerrat Cultural Region took some years to finalise but it saw the creation of the Suerrat United Worlds Council, the Suerrat Regional Security Force and the Regional Criminal Police Organisation. As not all the worlds within the cultural zone were original members of the old republic nor had a majority of Suerrat in their population, a diplomatic program was instituted by the SUWC to those worlds inviting them to send representatives to sit on the council. While some accepted the offer others declined, despite being within the cultural region's area and its effects.

Whilst the Suerrat were overjoyed at the small amount of autonomy granted them, they were ultimately unsatisfied by the result. News arrived in 730 of the Geonee's intention of petitioning Empress Margaret to create a Geonee Autonomous Zone. Spurred on by the Geonee, the SUWC formulated a plan to bring a petition to grant the Suerrat greater freedoms by making the cultural region in the same manner. Once again, Suerrat nobles curried the favour of other Imperial nobles, enticing them to facilitate the formation of the autonomous zone. Deals were struck with Geonee nobles to secure votes in their favour.

Proxies were collected from other nobles to secure the number of votes to sway the Moot. The plan was progressing well when, in 737, just before her untimely death, Empress Margaret sent a veiled threat to the Geonee – their request for autonomy would be seen as insurrection and result in dire consequences. In view of Margaret's response, the UWC voted not to proceed with their plans.

THE MODERN DAY

During the next 400 years, the Suerrat continued to spread across the Imperium, with significant populations on hundreds of worlds, totalling an estimated population of approximately 359 billion within the Imperium. The number of Suerrat beyond the borders of the Imperium is unknown but suspected to be significant.

While no longer interested in terraforming new worlds, the Suerrat continue to terraform worlds for others. Their knowledge and techniques are considered some of the best in the Imperium, if not all of Charted Space. They have impacted the development of hundreds of worlds through the design of bespoke organisms, improved the lives of countless billions through their use of genetic engineering and advanced pharmaceuticals, and have proved to be an asset to the Third Imperium as a whole.

SUERRAT TIMELINE

The following gathers together some important dates and events in Suerrat history.

Date	Event
-315000	Ancients arrive on Terra and remove a group of hominids, taking them to Ilelish.
-300000	Small group of humans removed from Terra by the Ancients.
-259500	Migukas domesticated.
-50000	Suerrat have spread across the surface of Ilelish except for the polar and glacial regions.
-24000	Agriculture is developed.
-15000	Settled farming began.
-14500	Copper is discovered, manufacturing of copper tools commences.
-14000	The first civilisations; Nipik, Kushidam and Gennismas.
-13500	TL1 is achieved when bronze is discovered by the Zukarlak.
-13400	Zukarlak settlements merge into a single unified and sophisticated culture.
-13400	Tase'at civilisation is founded and spreads across the Nansug sea.
-13000	Laminkir civilisation is founded and begins spreading along the western shores of the Pem ocean.
-12600	Tare'at civilisation comes to a sudden and unexplained end.
-12300	Rutkin civilisation becomes a trading power on the Nansug sea and trade with the Kaian and Tamlom cultures.
-12000	Major trade routes stretch across the continent and seas, connecting the Nipik, Kushidam, Gennisma, Rutkin, Kaian and Tamlom peoples.
-10500	Iron is discovered.
-10300	TL2 is achieved with the discovery of advanced sail and the printing press.
-10000	Suerrat experience their industrial revolution and achieve TL3.
-9800	TL6 achieved.
-9787	First forays into the orbit of Ilelish.
-9785	First unmanned probes sent to Ilelish's moon.
-9783	First crewed flight to the Ilelish's moon.
-9760	First colony established on Ilelish's moon.
-9750	Ilelish's moon settled by eight colonies with a combined population of 10,000.

-9742	Suerrat scientists split the atom.
-9700	TL8 achieved and the Suerrat begin exploring their star system.
-9689	Thermonuclear-powered propulsion invented.
-9585	Sublight probes sent to Ilelish's closest stellar neighbours in the hopes of finding habitable planets.
-9550	Suerrat solar system largely explored and colonised.
-9541	First reports received from interstellar sublight probes indicate habitable planets.
-9534	First slowboat launched towards Eritlep (Beta Lyra).
-9590	Second slowboat launched towards Dilipuu.
-9500	Achieved TL9. Improved propulsion allows the Suerrat to more remote solar systems with less travel time.
-9497	Ramscoops invented illuminating the need for slowboats to carry vast amounts of fuel.
-8100	The Suerrat Federation comprises more than two dozen star systems linked by gravitically-propelled ram-scoop sublight ships capable of achieving one half the speed of light.
-8100	Suerrat jump drive technology from the Vilani.
-5400	Consolidation Wars commence.
-5390	Vilani fleet arrives at the edge of republic space and demands surrender. The Suerrat refuse and war commences.
-5370	The Suerrat Republic sues for peace and surrenders unconditionally to the Ziru Sirka.
-4015	Consolidation Wars end.
-2404	Interstellar Wars era begins.
-2273	Ninth Interstellar War begins.
-2224	Following the Battle of the Three Suns, the Suerrat declare their independence and ally with the Terrans of the confederation.
-2204	Founding of the Rule of Man.
-1776	The Long Night falls.
-163	Suerrat rediscover jump drive.
0	Founding of the Third Imperium.
70	First contact between the Suerrat Republic and the Third Imperium.
80	Talks between the Suerrat Republic and the Third Imperium break down.
81	The Domain of Ilelish is founded.
81	The Third Imperium commences with the Ilelish Pacification Campaign.
105	Ilelish Pacification Campaign ended.
418	Ilelish Revolt begins.
420	The Ilelish Revolt spreads to six subsectors.
420	The worlds involved in the Ilelish Revolt are blockaded by the Imperial Navy.
435	Ilelish Revolt put down and archduke deposed.
637	Suerrat abandon development of desert worlds due to the success of the Jonkeereen Project.
671	Suerrat petition Empress Margret I to recognise their culture and establish a Suerrat Cultural Region.
674	The Suerrat Cultural Region established.
737	The Suerrat Cultural Region withdraw all petitions for further autonomy and the formation of independent armed forces.
1105	Current date.

SUERRAT TRAVELLERS

Suerrat Travellers follow the same procedures and concepts as human Travellers, as detailed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*.

SUERRAT

Suerrat Travellers have the following modifiers to their characteristics: STR+1, DEX+2, SOC-1.

SUERRAT TRAITS

Suerrat Travellers all possess the following traits.

Cold Resistance: Due to their thick coat of hair, Suerrat are more resistant to cold weather than either Solomani or Vilani. Any damage from cold they receive is reduced by 1D. Unfortunately, their hair also makes them somewhat less tolerant of the heat. The damage they receive from heat is increased by 1D.

Poor Senses: Suerrat eyes are sensitive to bright lights but are superior in the dark. They suffer a penalty of DM-1 to all checks requiring vision in light equal to or greater than normal daylight unless wearing protective lenses such as sunglasses. In the dark, Suerrat gain a bonus of DM+1 to all checks requiring vision if there is some light source, no matter how dim.

Radiation Resistance: Suerrat have an abundance of cell and DNA repair proteins to protect them from the radiation produced by their sun's increased stellar activity. Suerrat may ignore the first 50 rads they receive in all radiation exposure events.

STARTING AGE

Suerrat Travellers begin their careers at 18 years of age.

TITLES

Suerrat use no titles among themselves and generally reject the use of titles by others. If titles must be used, they tend to be applied reluctantly or even belligerently.

BACKGROUND SKILLS

Suerrat gain 3+ EDU DM background skills as described in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. One of the background skills must be Athletics 0 due to their arboreal adaptions.

PRE-CAREER EDUCATION

Suerrat may use the pre-career education options from the *Traveller Core Rulebook,* page 16, choosing university or military academy.

THE DRAFT

Suerrat Travellers may submit themselves to the draft just like any other Traveller.

CAREERS

Suerrat may enter any career as described in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. Many favour the Entertainer, Merchant, Scout or Rogue careers. Many also pursue a Scientist career, specialising in the biological and environmental sciences. Few Suerrat adopt the Agent, Marine or Noble careers.

Regional Criminal Police Organisation: The Regional Criminal Police Organisation is an interstellar police organisation available to all Suerrat Travellers. Other species from the Suerrat Republic may also enter this career.

Regional Security Force: The Regional Security Force protects the borders of the Suerrat Cultural Region from pirates and smugglers. Suerrat may choose to enter the Regional Security Force. Other species may also enter the Regional Security Force if they come from within the Suerrat Cultural Region.

Careers Table

Career	Assignment	Qualification	Survival	Advancement
Regional Criminal and Police Organisation		INT 6+		
	Support		END 5+	EDU 7+
	Analysis		INT 7+	INT 7+
	Communication		END 5+	EDU 7+
Regional Security Force		INT 6+		
	Investigator		INT 7+	INT 5+
	Field		END 6+	INT 6+
	Special Operations		STR 6+	EDU 6+

AGEING

Suerrat ageing is the same as standard. They commence ageing rolls at 34 (at the end of their fourth term). Ageing rolls gain DM+1 in addition to any other modifiers applied.

SUERRAT LIFE EVENTS

Suerrat have similar life events to other humans. Use the Life Events table in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*.

MUSTERING OUT

Suerrat Travellers use the mustering out system as detailed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*.

ROLEPLAYING SUERRAT

Suerrat are very friendly and cooperative. Suerrat will often be the first to greet strangers and if it appears someone needs assistance they will be the first to offer it. Their friendly nature leads to their need to feel they belong. Family is important to Suerrat and if they do not have any they are likely to view Travellers as their surrogate family and act accordingly.

As a result of living in highly crowded cities, Suerrat are almost obsessively polite and will actively prevent friction or insult. They will allow others to go before them, ensure others are let into queues before them, allow others to enter doors before them and so on. If a misunderstanding does occur, Suerrat will apologise first, humbly and sincerely, even if it is not their fault. In situations where friction develops, Suerrat will go to great measures to smooth things over, even acting as diplomats or mediators to assist others in living harmoniously and cooperatively.

While cooperative and peaceful, Suerrat value their way of life highly. If threatened, they will try to resolve the situation peacefully, making concessions and backing down to ensure things do not get heated. However, if these tactics do not work, they will defend themselves and their way of life ruthlessly. This makes them unsuitable for following orders they are opposed to, or which will prove dangerous to them or those they love. They would rather throw down arms than compromise these principles.

Suerrat deeply love the natural world and will often surround themselves with as much nature as they can. Even in the limited space of a starship, their quarters will house numerous plants and even a small menagerie of pets. Suerrat will volunteer to be the caretaker of any shipboard plants or animals. They champion the preservation of natural environments and fight – peacefully at first but with greater and greater violence if peaceful measures are unsuccessful – to protect endangered species.

Suerrat love novelty. Nothing brings a smile to Suerrat faces as much as a discovery, novel experience or new find. Others often find Suerrat love of novelty both somewhat childlike and at the same time disarmingly charming. Suerrat will always be on the lookout for something new and exciting to attract their attention. This can lead to some being flighty and lacking concentration, while with others it leads to them becoming obsessed with their new novelty until they have studied it completely if it is an object or subject, or work at it constantly until it is fully completed if it is a task. Sometimes, Travellers may have to find something new about an old task to draw a Suerrat's attention but once they gain it they will have it for as long as needed.

1 REGIONAL CRIMINAL POLICE ORGANISATION

This career works with the police of other worlds in bringing interstellar criminals to justice.

Qualification: INT 6+
DM-1 for every previous career.

ASSIGNMENTS

Choose one of the following:

Support: You supply the backroom support for the RCPO.
Analyst: You are an investigator searching for interstellar criminals.
Communications: You deliver and collect data updates.

CAREER PROGRESS

	SURVIVAL	ADVANCEMENT
Support	END 5+	EDU 7+
Analyst	INT 7+	INT 7+
Communications	END 5+	EDU 7+

MUSTERING OUT BENEFITS

1D	CASH	BENEFITS
1	Cr2000	Contact
2	Cr4000	INT +1
3	Cr10000	Ally
4	Cr15000	Ship Share
5	Cr20000	Cybernetic Implant
6	Cr50000	SOC+1 or Cybernetic Implant
7	Cr100000	TAS Membership

SKILLS AND TRAINING

1D	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	SERVICE SKILLS	ADVANCED EDUCATION (MIN. EDU 8+)
1	INT +1	Admin	Advocate
2	EDU +1	Deception	Electronics (comms)
3	END +1	Diplomat	Electronics (computers)
4	Streetwise	Persuade	Electronics (sensors)
5	Gambler	Electronics	Investigate
6	Drive	Steward	Science (Forensics, Psychology or Sophontology)

1D	SUPPORT	ANALYSIS	COMMUNICATIONS
1	Astrogation	Admin	Electronics
2	Electronics (computers)	Investigate	Pilot
3	Engineer	Electronics (sensors)	Engineer
4	Mechanic	Electronics (comms)	Athletics
5	Electronics (remote ops)	Electronics (computers)	Astrogation
6	Electronics (sensors)	Advocate	Mechanics

RANKS AND BONUSES

RANK	SUPPORT, ANALYSIS AND COMMUNICATIONS	SKILL OR BONUS
0	—	—
1	Agent	Deception 1
2	Field Agent	Investigate 1
3	—	—
4	Speciality Agent	Leadership
5	Assistant Director	—
6	Director	—

EVENTS

2D	EVENT
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishaps table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You are transferred to another planet to learn their policing methods. Roll EDU 10+ to gain any one skill.
4	You have the opportunity to play department politics, or you can ignore it all and focus on the case at hand. If you choose to play, roll Deception 8+. If you succeed, gain a Contact. Fail and you gain a Rival.
5	You are given advanced training in investigation techniques. Gain any one of Investigate 1, Electronics (sensors) 1, Science (any) 1 or Electronics (computers) 1.
6	You establish a network of contacts. Gain two Contact.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Event table.
8	Your supervisor questions your judgement on a case and orders you to back off. If you do so, nothing happens. If you continue, roll Investigate 8+. Succeed and your hunch was correct, and you gain DM+2 to your next Advancement roll. Fail and you end up getting an innocent civilian hurt, and you suffer DM-2 to your next Advancement roll.
9	You become good friends with a fellow agent. Gain them as an Ally.
10	You are part of a high-profile investigative unit. Gain Investigate 1, SOC +1, or Carouse +1.
11	The commissioner has their eye on you. Either gain Leadership or +4 to your next Advancement roll.
12	You are decorated for solving the impossible case. You are automatically promoted.

MISHAPS

1D	MISHAP
1	You are severely injured (this is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury table). Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury table and take the lower result.
2	You blunder during an investigation, letting a dangerous criminal walk free. Gain the criminal as an Enemy.
3	A seemingly routine investigation leads into the upper echelons of power. If you drop this investigation immediately, you are not ejected from this career. If you continue, you learn a senior official or noble is corrupt in some fashion. They have you fired before you can bring them to justice – gain them as an Enemy.
4	A criminal walks free, causing you to lose faith in the system.
5	Someone tries to kill you and your family. Roll on the Injury table and lose one family member, Ally or Contact. Gain an Enemy.
6	Injured. Roll on the Injury table.

2 REGIONAL SECURITY FORCE

This career protects the borders of the Suerrat Republic from the predations of pirates, smugglers and the transport of undocumented immigrants.

Qualification: INT 6+
DM-1 for every previous career.
DM-2 if you are aged over 30.

ASSIGNMENTS

Choose one of the following:

Investigations: You investigate interstellar criminal activities.
Field: You are a field agent on a starship.
Special Operations: You are a member of the RSF combat forces.

CAREER PROGRESS

	SURVIVAL	ADVANCEMENT
Investigator	INT 7+	INT 5+
Field	END 6+	INT 6+
Special Operations	STR 6+	EDU 6+

MUSTERING OUT BENEFITS

1D	CASH	BENEFITS
1	Cr3000	INT+1
2	Cr5000	D3 Contacts
3	Cr12000	Weapon
4	Cr18000	Law Enforcement Gear
5	Cr24000	2 Ship Shares
6	Cr55000	TAS Membership
7	Cr85000	D3 Allies

SKILLS AND TRAINING

1D	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	SERVICE SKILLS	ADVANCED EDUCATION (MIN. EDU 8+)
1	Gun Combat	Advocate	Advocate
2	DEX +1	Vacc Suit	Language
3	END +1	Admin	Explosives
4	Melee	Gun Combat	Medic
5	INT +1	Athletics	Vacc Suit
6	Athletics	Pilot	Electronics

1D	INVESTIGATOR	FIELD	SPECIAL OPERATIONS
1	Admin	Pilot	Gun Combat
2	Investigate	Engineer	Tactics (military)
3	Streetwise	Mechanic	Recon
4	Persuade	Gunner	Heavy Weapons
5	Electronics (computers)	Electronics	Vacc Suit
6	Advocate	Gun Combat	Melee

RANKS AND BONUSES

RANK	INVESTIGATOR, FIELD AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS	SKILL OR BONUS
0	Assistant Officer	Gun Combat 1
1	Officer	Recon 1
2	Force Officer	—
3	Senior Officer	Leadership 1
4	Force Inspector	—
5	Force Commander	—
6	Commissioner	SOC 10 or SOC +1, whichever is higher

EVENTS

2D	EVENT
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishaps table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	A dangerous former criminal has escaped and now stalks you and your family. Now and in each term afterwards until the criminal is caught or you leave this career, roll Investigate 10+. If you succeed, the criminal is caught and you gain DM+2 to your next Advancement roll. If you fail by Effect -6 or worse, lose one Contact, Ally or family member.
4	You establish a good network of connections. Gain two Contacts.
5	You are sent to a planet to research a criminal syndicate which is particularly difficult to find. Roll Investigate 10+ to automatically advance this term.
6	You are in a position to gain an injury to ensure a criminal gets what they deserve. If you choose to do so, roll Athletics (dexterity) 8+. If successful, you are automatically promoted. If you fail, roll on the Injury table.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Event table.
8	A powerful criminal syndicate offers you a bribe. If you accept, you gain one extra Benefit roll each term you remain in this career. If you refuse, you gain an Enemy.
9	You learn something which could destroy your immediate supervisor's career instantly, allowing you to take their place. Withhold the information and gain them as an Ally. Exploit the information and gain DM+2 on your next Advancement roll but your supervisor as an Enemy.
10	You are given the opportunity to gain some advanced training. Roll EDU 8+ to gain one of Leadership +1, Investigate +1, Advocate +1 or Athletics (any) +1.
11	A new member of the force has gotten into legal trouble. Help them and gain Advocate +1. Use their troubles to your best interests and gain Deception +1.
12	You are decorated for heroism beyond the call of duty. You are automatically promoted.

MISHAPS

1D	MISHAP
1	You are severely injured (this is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury table). Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury table and take the lower result.
2	A gunfight goes poorly for you and you now have a bullet lodged in an organ. Lose END -1.
3	Your face is plastered all over criminal message centres. Gain SOC +1 but gain an Enemy.
4	The ship you worked on is attacked by pirates. Roll Gun Combat (any) or Gunner (any) 8+ to avoid rolling on the Injury table.
5	You make friends with a criminal you are pursuing. You are fired but gain them as a Contact.
6	You are decorated for solving the impossible case. You are automatically promoted.

CENTRAL SUPPLY CATALOGUE: SUERRAT

Suerrat goods can be obtained all over the Third Imperium but are most commonly and easily found in Ilelish and the surrounding subsectors where they cost the amounts shown in the catalogue. Suerrat goods become harder to find the further one looks beyond the subsectors immediately surrounding Ilelish, with a commensurate increase in expense. The price will often double or even triple for each full sector away the Traveller is from Ilelish.

AUGMENTS

Suerrat are well known for their advanced genetic engineering capabilities and they have used their skill in producing many biological augments. Biological augments are often living creatures which require sustenance and care. If neglected they can become ill, reducing their effectiveness or even die. As these are biological, they are not affected by electromagnetic attacks or detected by electronic means.

AIR FILTER SYMBIONT

An organism which is only one centimetre thick but large enough to coat the inside of the mouth, nasal cavities and down into the trachea. It creates a biological filter to remove atmospheric taints found in Atmospheres 4, 7 and 9 before they affect its host. Air filter symbionts have a lifespan of 20 years and must be engineered for a specific taint.

Only one air filter symbiont can be used at a time. Introducing a new symbiont will automatically result in the old one being killed as the new one takes its place. At TL10, the symbiont can remove one specific type of taint.

At TL12, it can remove three specific taints and at TL15 is able to remove five specific taints. The downside of this symbiont is its host suffers a penalty of DM-1 to any skill roll requiring the use of smell or taste.

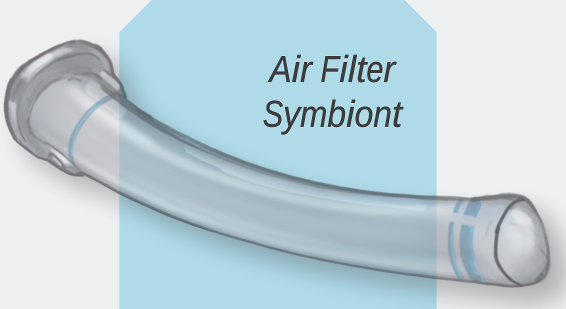
Item	TL	Kg	Cost
Air Filter Symbiont	10	—	Cr500
Air Filter Symbiont	12	—	Cr1500
Air Filter Symbiont	15	—	Cr3000

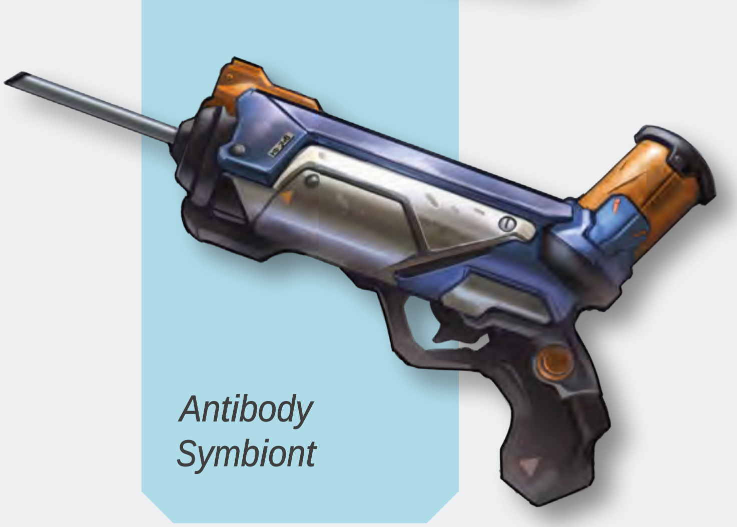
ANTIBODY SYMBIONT

A microscopic organism, the antibody symbiont is introduced into the host's bloodstream where it migrates to the lymph nodes to hibernate until needed. When the host is exposed to disease or infection, the symbiont activates and produces its own dendritic cells, B cells and macrophages to aid the host's body in combatting the invader. The host receives DM+1 to any checks made to resist the disease or infection. Antibody symbionts continue to reproduce in the host's body but die if transplanted into another person.

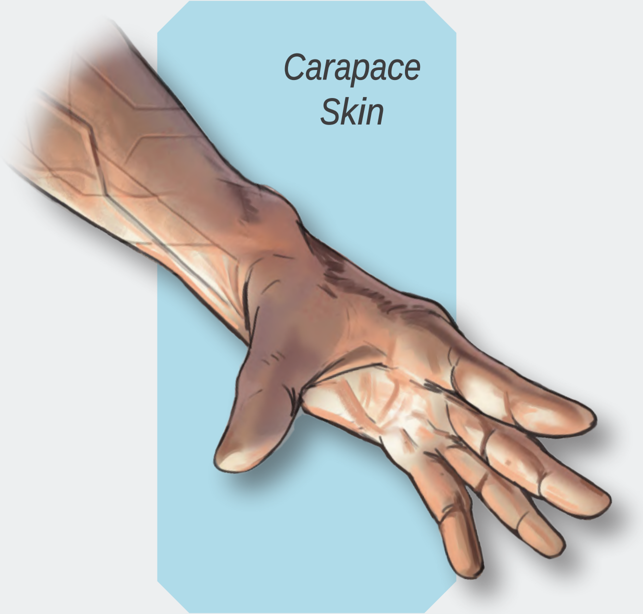
At TL12, the symbiont provides DM+2 and at TL14 DM+3.

Item	TL	Kg	Cost
Antibody Symbiont	11	—	Cr20000
Antibody Symbiont	12	—	Cr30000
Antibody Symbiont	14	—	Cr45000


Air Filter Symbiont


Antibody Symbiont

CARAPACE SKIN



Through a short series of genetic treatments, the epidermal layer of the recipient hardens and knits together tightly, forming a protective layer which acts as a form of light armour. Once the process is complete, the Traveller's skin provides similar protection to jack armour. Additional armour can be worn over the carapace skin, adding together their protection values. The process comes with the disadvantage of reducing the recipient's sense of touch, resulting in DM-1 to any checks involving tactile senses. The skin of those who undertake the process feels stiff and tough to the touch, making it detectable to those with knowledge of the augment.

The protection afforded by carapace skin increases at higher Tech Levels. Multiple treatments supersede the previous protection value with the new one.

ARMOUR TYPE	PROTECTION	TL	RAD	KG	COST	REQUIRED SKILL
Carapace Skin	+1	9	0	—	Cr75000	—
Carapace Skin	+2	10	0	—	Cr150000	—
Carapace Skin	+3	12	0	—	Cr375000	—
Carapace Skin	+5	14	0	—	Cr750000	—
Carapace Skin	+7	15	0	—	MCr1.875	—

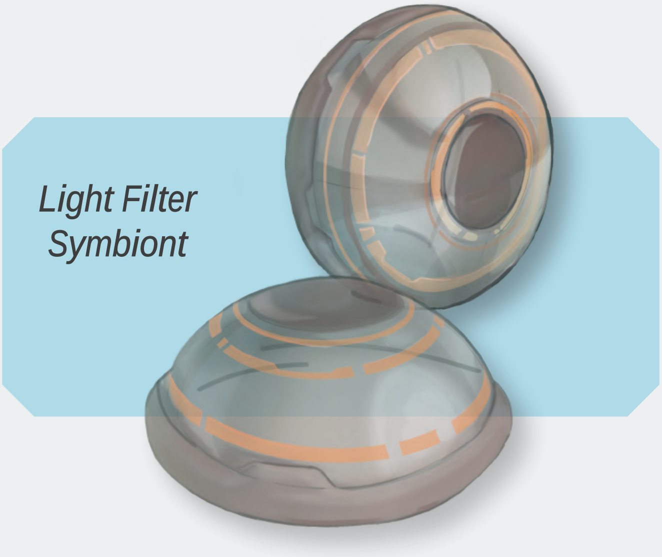
LIGHT FILTER SYMBIONT

Light filter symbionts look like clear contact lenses which when applied to the eyes automatically polarise, thus acting like sunglasses. They remove any penalties gained from being exposed to bright light by one. The symbiont gains nutrition directly from the fluid in the eye. Light filter symbionts have a life span of 10 years, after which they die and drop out of the eyes. Only one pair of light filter symbionts can be worn at a time.

At TL11, the light filter symbiont reduces penalties gained from bright light by two and operate as light intensifiers, reducing all penalty DMs from low light by one if there is some light present. When operating in this fashion, the host's eyes glow yellow-green or yellow-orange.

At TL13, the symbiont reduces penalties gained from bright lights by three and low light by two. For a small additional charge, light filter symbionts can also change the wearer's iris colour.

Item	TL	Kg	Cost
Light Filter Symbiont	9	—	Cr3000
Light Filter Symbiont	11	—	Cr6000
Light Filter Symbiont	13	—	Cr120000



LIFE EXTENSION SYMBIONT

These symbiotic microbes are custom designed for the individual for whom they are intended. The microbes are injected into the target's body, where they multiply and migrate into individual cells to repair any damage caused by the ageing process. As cells multiply, the telomeres located at the ends of the chromosomes degrade, which contributes to replication errors. The symbiont actively repairs any damaged telomeres, thus delaying the ageing process. The life extension symbiont is not perfect and telomere degradation can be missed so that life can be extended and the ageing process slowed, but not stopped.

The recipient of the life extension symbiont gains DM+1 to every ageing roll they make after the microbe is introduced into their system. Multiple doses will not increase the bonus given.

At TL13, the bonus to the ageing roll is increased to DM+2.

At TL15, the bonus to the ageing roll is increased to DM+3.

If a Traveller receives another dose of the symbiont at a higher Tech Level, the greater bonus supersedes that gained from the lower Tech Level symbiont.

Item	TL	Kg	Cost
Life Extension Symbiont	10	—	MCr1
Life Extension Symbiont	13	—	MCr5
Life Extension Symbiont	15	—	MCr25

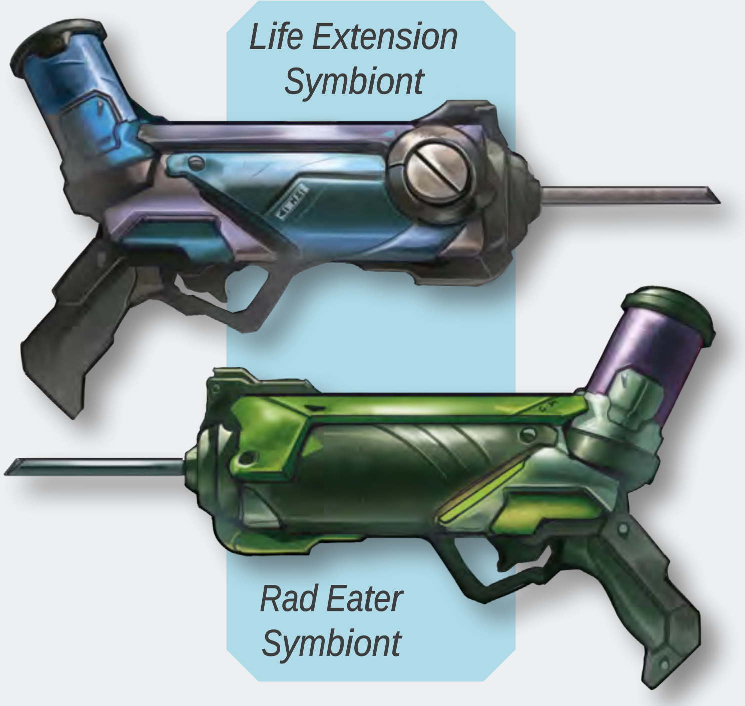
RAD EATER SYMBIONT

The rad eater symbiont is a microscopic organism which absorbs radiation and processes it into a harmless by-product, enabling the host organism to receive higher doses of radiation than normal. The symbiont requires only a small amount of nutrients from the host's body but when processing radiation it requires larger amounts of energy, causing the host to consume additional calories. Normally this amounts to double the number of calories normally consumed for 1D days after exposure. The rad eater symbiont can be used in conjunction with other forms of radiation treatment. Additional treatments of the symbiont do not increase the amount of radiation it can process.

At TL10, the host can ignore the first 50 rads they receive.

At TL13, the host may ignore the first 75 rads they receive but must consume three times the normal number of calories for 1D days.

At TL15 they can ignore the first 150 rads they receive but must consume four times the normal number of calories for 1D days.



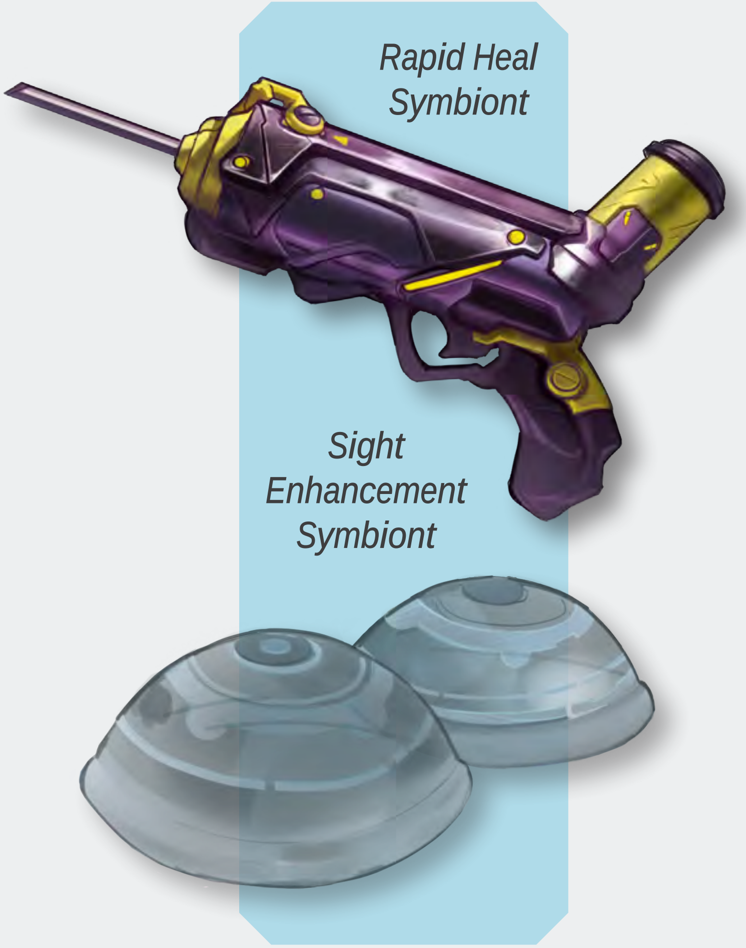
ARMOUR TYPE	PROTECTION	TL	RAD	KG	COST	REQUIRED SKILL
Rad Eater Symbiont	—	9	50	—	Cr100000	—
Rad Eater Symbiont	—	11	75	—	Cr200000	—
Rad Eater Symbiont	—	13	150	—	Cr500000	—

RAPID HEAL SYMBIONT

A microscopic genetically matched organism living in the host's blood, the rapid heal symbiont remains inactive until the host is injured, at which point it rushes to the site and assists the local cells in making repairs. The microbe can stem blood loss and assist in replacing lost tissue. The scars produced by the organism are quite thick and puckered. Any Medic check made by or for the host of this symbiont receives a bonus DM+1. The symbiont reproduces naturally within the body of the host but dies if transplanted to another.

At TL11 the bonus increases to DM+2 and at TL14 to DM+3.

Item	TL	Kg	Cost
Sight Enhancement Symbiont	9	—	Cr5000
Sight Enhancement Symbiont	10	—	Cr12000
Sight Enhancement Symbiont	12	—	Cr15000



SIGHT ENHANCEMENT SYMBIONT

Similar to cybernetic eyes but without surgery, the sight enhancement symbiont looks like a pair of contact lenses.

At TL9 they only correct vision impairments, returning short or long sightedness to 20/20 vision. At TL10, they give their host the abilities of a set of binoculars.

At TL12 they also give the abilities of IR/Light intensifier goggles. Sight enhancement symbionts give their host an eerie metallic sheen to the iris which cannot be hidden. They cannot be used with any other symbionts which live on the eye. Sight enhancement symbionts have a life span of approximately eight years.

Item	TL	Kg	Cost
Rapid Heal Symbiont	9	—	Cr40000
Rapid Heal Symbiont	12	—	Cr80000
Rapid Heal Symbiont	14	—	Cr200000

HOME COMFORTS

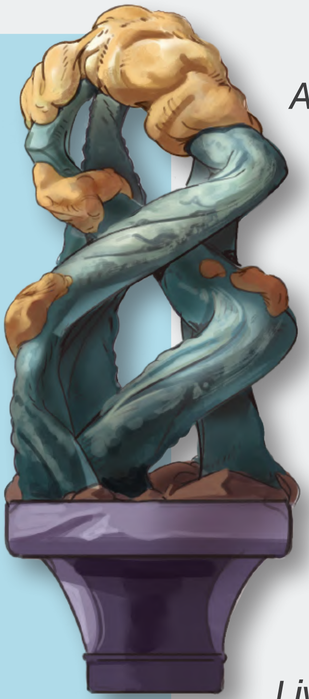
Suerrat have extended their genetic engineering skills to provide home comforts through biological means.

AIR CLEANSER

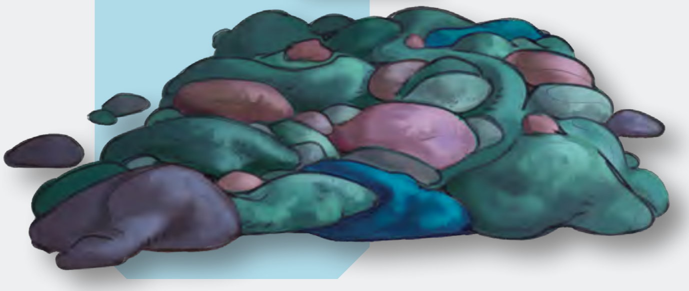
This is a genetically engineered plant which can subsist on artificial light and draw nutrients from the atmosphere. The air cleanser removes offensive odours from the air and replaces them with a pleasant scent specified on purchase. A single plant, provided in its own container, can cleanse the air in a standard stateroom within an hour and maintain a pleasant aroma for the extent of its life.

More plants are required for larger areas. The air cleanser produces small attractive flowers but cannot produce viable seeds, nor do cuttings or splitting the plant take. The air cleanser has a life span of approximately five years. Scents include but are not limited to vanilla, citrus, sandalwood, freshly cut grass and other pleasant aromas.

Item	TL	Kg	Cost
Air Cleaner	9	3kg	Cr500



Air Cleanser



Living Carpet

LIVING CARPET

This moss-like organism is a living floor covering. It can photosynthesise under artificial lights, draws nutrients from the natural detritus produced by living creatures such as dead skin cells and absorbs moisture directly from the air. Living carpet is provided in squares measuring 1.5 metres by 1.5 metres and never grows beyond this size. It comes in a large variety of colours and patterns, or may be bioluminescent based on the owner's desires. Living carpet lives for approximately 25 years before needing to be replaced.

At TL11, a living carpet can alter its colour based on predetermined conditions such as temperature and moisture or in response to a toxin in the atmosphere.

Item	TL	Kg	Cost
Living Carpet	9	5kg	Cr1000

PETS

Suerrat designed several lifeforms for the express purpose of companionship and making life more comfortable. While often more expensive than similar artificial counterparts, Suerrat biological constructs have the additional benefit of not being affected by electromagnetic attacks or detected by electronic means. As living organisms, if they are not cared for adequately, they can sicken and die.

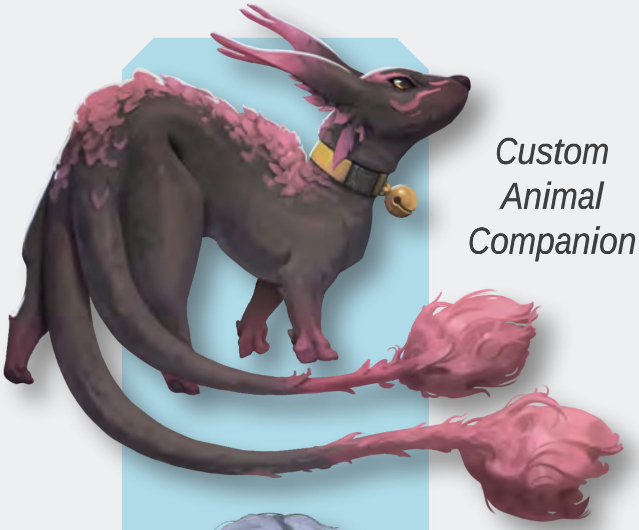
CUSTOM ANIMAL COMPANION

Cute and adorable custom pets come in a variety of styles with a guarantee from the manufacturer ensuring no two are alike. All the rage in wealthy and influential circles, it is not unusual to find one of these placid and adorable animals riding on the shoulder of a famous musical artist or curled up in the arms of a noble. Custom animal companions bond with their owner. They are always small and have no offensive capability, although many are designed to give an alarm if they feel they or their owner is threatened. These pets have an average lifespan of 10 years and are completely incapable of breeding. Even attempting to clone these animals will result in failure without the necessary amino acids which are understandably kept secret by the manufacturer. Custom animal companions become available at TL9.

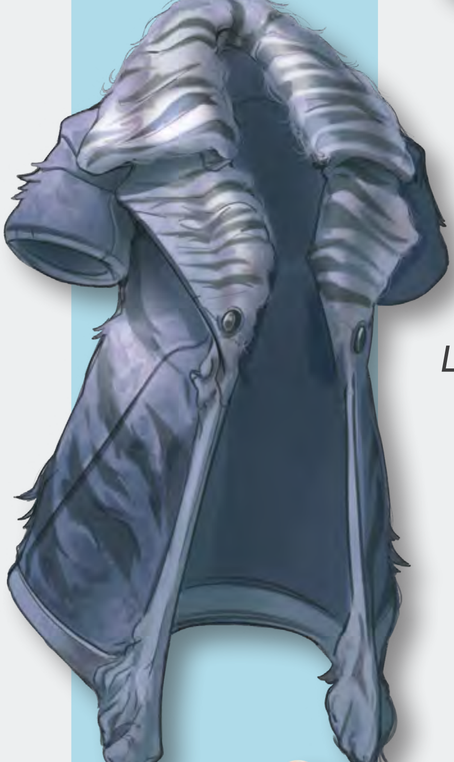
Most pets are based on small hunters but the process of designing them has reduced their instincts into little more than playful frolicking. A custom pet is completely unable to survive on its own in the wild.

Custom pets can be designed with any number of traits a purchaser desires but the cost of such modifications increases the price of the animal considerably.

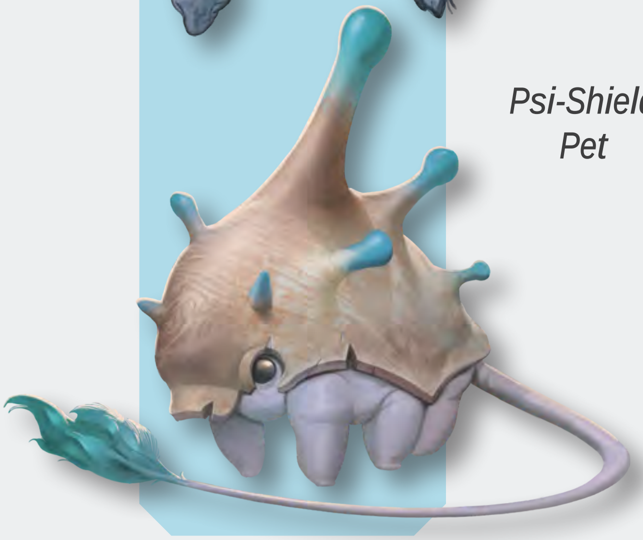
Animal	Hits	Speed	Cost
Custom Animal Companion	4	6m	Cr8000
Skills	Recon 1		
Attacks	1		
Traits	Alarm, Small (-3)		
Behaviour	Carnivore, Hunter		



Custom Animal Companion



Living Fur Coat



Psi-Shield Pet

LIVING FUR COAT

A simple organism bioengineered to resemble a fur coat, it has no senses and draws sustenance directly from the natural detritus produced by its wearer. Waste products are released into the atmosphere and have no odour. Living fur coats help keep their wearer warm, reducing all cold damage by 1D and increasing the time between damage rolls to once every eight hours.

At TL11 cold damage is reduced by 2D. At TL12, this reduction increases to 3D.

Living fur coats have an average lifespan of 10 years and are unable to reproduce.

Item	TL	Kg	Cost
Living Fur Coat	10	2kg	Cr5000
Living Fur Coat	11	2kg	Cr15000
Living Fur Coat	12	2kg	Cr500000

PSI-SHIELD PET

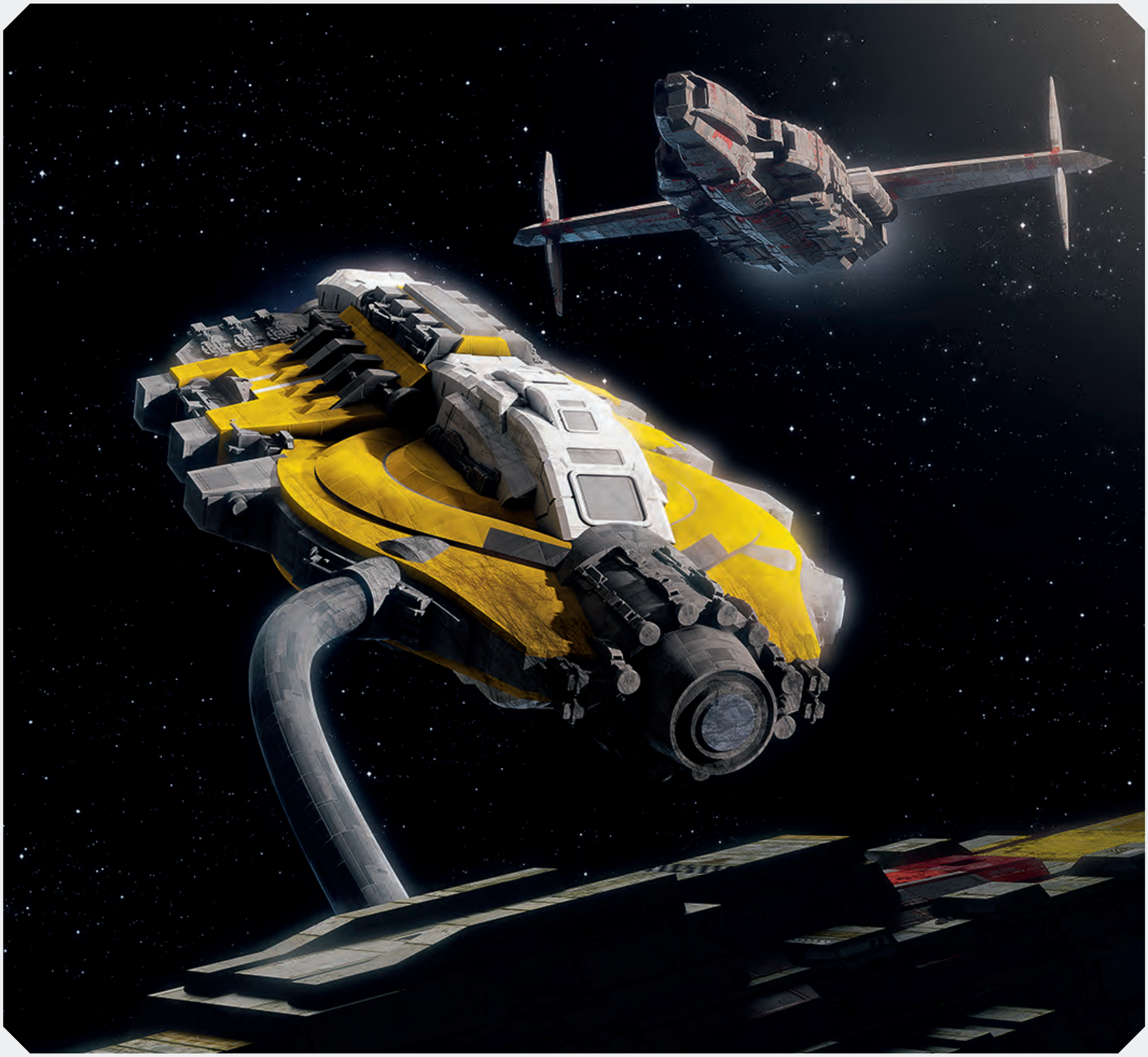
Highly desirable in the Spinward Marches, psi-shield pets are similar to custom animal companions and bonded to their owner. They can generate a psi-shield which also protects the owner if they are in physical contact. On a successful Recon check, a psi-shield pet will detect any psionic power being used against itself or its owner and raise an alarm. Psi-shield pets are completely unable to fend for themselves, having lost their innate sense of survival during their creation. They are completely unable to survive in the wild. If well cared for, these animals have an average lifespan of 12 standard years. They are sterile and unable to breed. Psi-shield pets become available at TL11.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**	**Cost**
Psi-Shield Pet	4	6m	Cr100000
Skills	Recon 2, Telepathy 0		
Attacks	Bite (1)		
Traits	Alarm, Psionics 1 (Shield only), Small (-3)		
Behaviour	Herbivore, Gatherer		

HIGH GUARD OF THE SUERRAT

Suerrat spacecraft design philosophy is similar to the Third Imperium. In fact, some of the Imperium's design philosophy has been heavily influenced by Suerrat methods. An Imperial human will have no difficulty operating a ship designed for Suerrat and vice versa.

One minor difference found in Suerrat vessels is the rather cramped crew spaces when compared to those of other species. On ships not designed by them, it is not unusual to find double the number of Suerrat quite happily occupying a stateroom than that for which it was designed. Suerrat have no difficulty living in close quarters and so this mindset is considered when designing habitable areas. On Suerrat vessels, naval architects will reduce staterooms by one or even two displacement tons and use the saved volume for common areas.



RCPO COURIER

Based on the tried and proven design of the *Sulieman* class scout/courier, the RCPO upgraded the manoeuvre and jump drives at the expense of cargo capacity and crew space. It has the deserved reputation of being a swift but cramped vessel to serve on.

The RCPO courier is primarily used to courier information to the widely dispersed RCPO offices throughout the Suerrat Cultural Region, ensuring available data is as up-to-date as possible. Couriers will occasionally carry cargo other than data, such as items used for evidence or RCPO agents.

Ideally, the RCPO courier has a crew complement of four but is routinely operated with two or even one multi-skilled crew member.

TL13		TONS	COST (MCr)
Hull	100 tons, Streamlined	—	6
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour: 4	5	5
M-Drive	Thrust 4 (reduced size x2)	3.2	6
J-Drive	Jump 4	15	22.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12, reduced size), Power 105	6.3	7.7
Fuel Tanks	J-4, four weeks operation	41	—
Bridge	Holographic Controls	10	0.63
Computer	Computer/15bis	—	3
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	Double Turret (beam lasers)	1	1.5
Craft	Docking Space (4 tons)	4.4	1
Systems	Fuel Scoops	—	—
	Fuel Processors (40 tons/day)	2	10
Staterooms	Standard x2	8	1
Software	Intellect	—	—
	Jump Control/4	—	0.4
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		2	—
Total: MCr68.83			

Crew

Pilot, Astrogator, Engineer, Gunner

Hull: 40

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

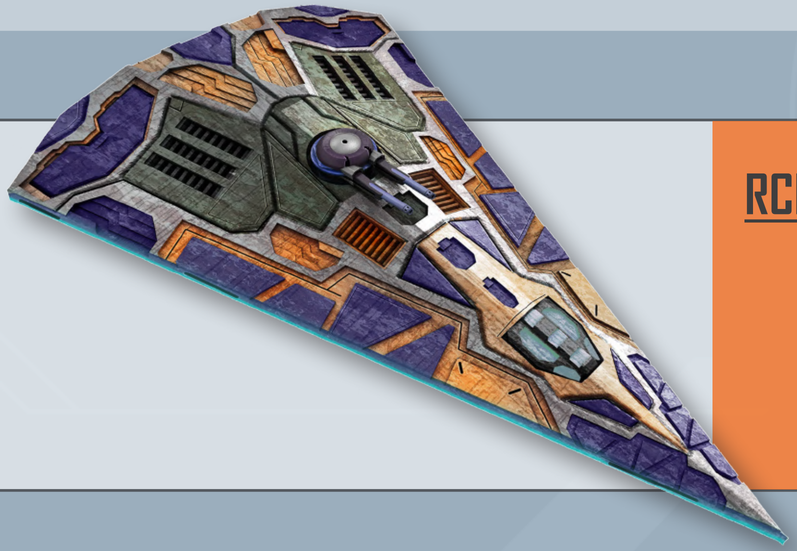
Cr5736/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr68.83

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	40
Manoeuvre Drive	40
Jump Drive	40
Sensors	2
Weapons	9
Fuel Processor	2

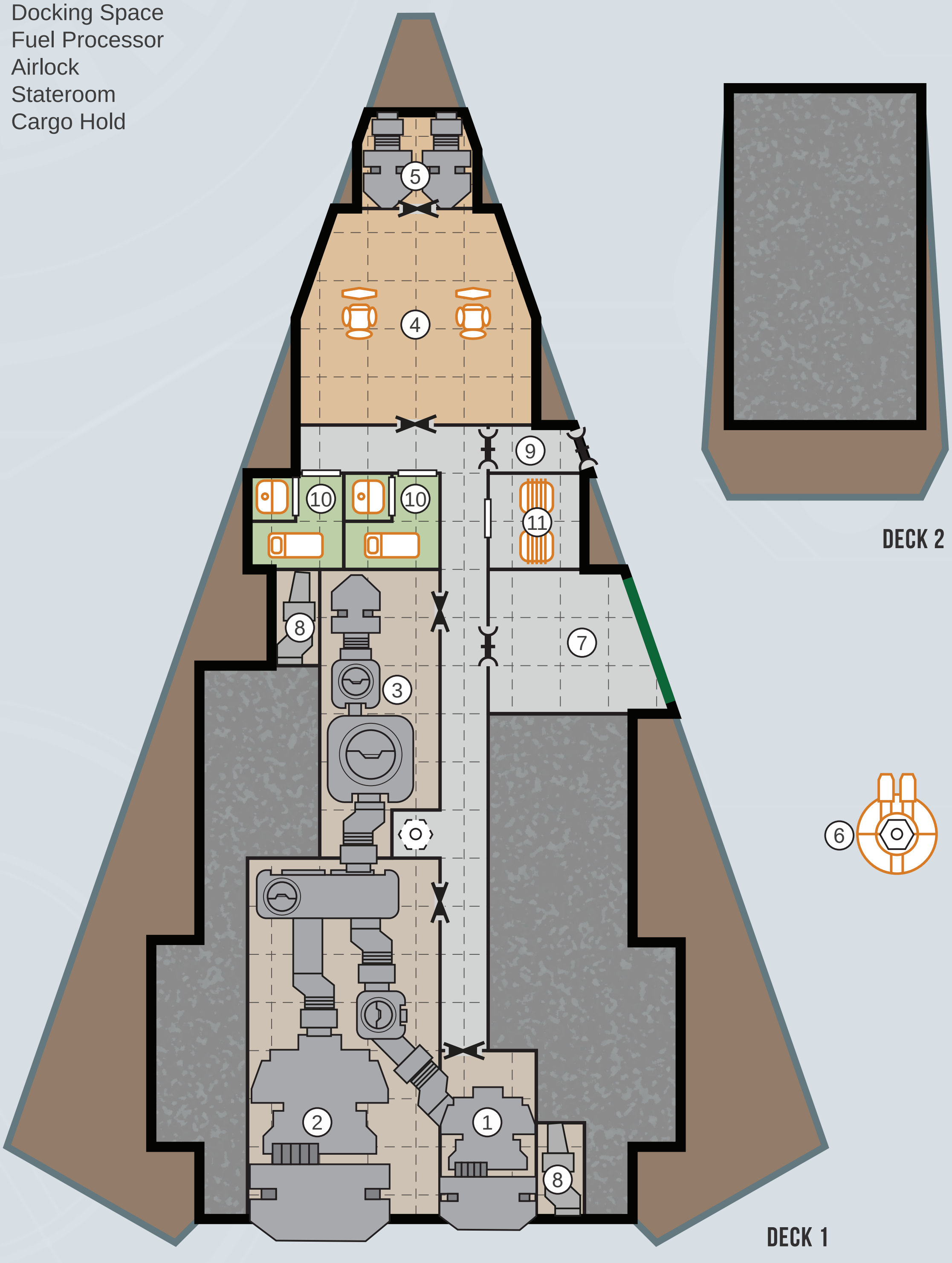


RCPO Courier

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Double Turret
7. Docking Space
8. Fuel Processor
9. Airlock
10. Stateroom
11. Cargo Hold

1 square = 0.5 Ton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DECK 1

SRSF CUSTOMS CUTTER

The SRSF customs cutter is a common sight around the worlds of the Suerrat Cultural Region. Built on a 300-ton hull, the cutter is well-armed and armoured for its size. It carries a complement of five marines for boarding and customs inspections. Each cutter boasts a brig for up to 12 prisoners and the cargo hold is large enough to carry most contraband discovered. The cutter has enough fuel to operate for eight weeks without refuelling and is able to micro-jump to out-system gas giants where it can lie in wait within the planet's cloud cover to pounce unawares on ships trying to avoid customs by wilderness refuelling.

TL12		TONS	COST (MCr)
Hull	300 tons, Streamlined	—	18
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour: 8	30	30
M-Drive	Thrust 5	15	30
J-Drive	Jump 2	20	30
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 315	21	21
Fuel Tanks	J-2, 8 weeks operation	65.1	—
Bridge	Holographic Controls	20	1.88
Computer	Computer/15fib	—	3
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Double Turret (beam lasers)	1	1.5
	Double Turret (pulse lasers)	1	2.5
	Particle Barbette	5	8
Systems	Armoury	2	0.5
	Breaching Tube	3	3
	Brig	4	0.25
	Fuel Scoops	—	—
	Fuel Processor (200 tons/day)	10	0.5
Staterooms	Standard x13	52	6.5
Software	Evade/1	—	1
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Intellect	—	—
	Jump Control/2	—	0.2
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Common Areas		13	1.3
Cargo		34	—
Total: MCr165.43			

Crew

Captain, Officers x2, Pilots x3, Astrogator, Engineers x2, Maintenance, Marines x5

Hull: 120

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

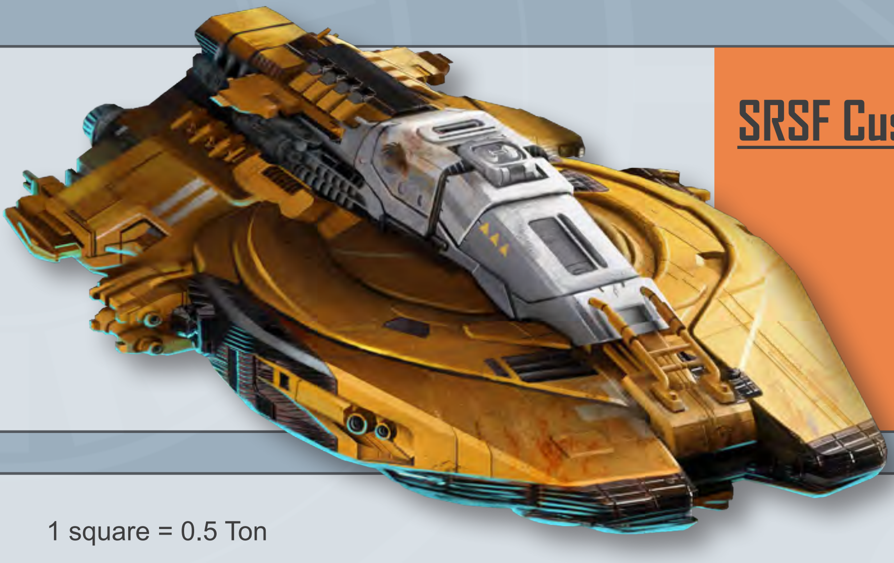
Cr13786/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr165.43

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	60
Manoeuvre Drive	150
Jump Drive	60
Sensors	4
Weapons	33
Fuel Processor	10

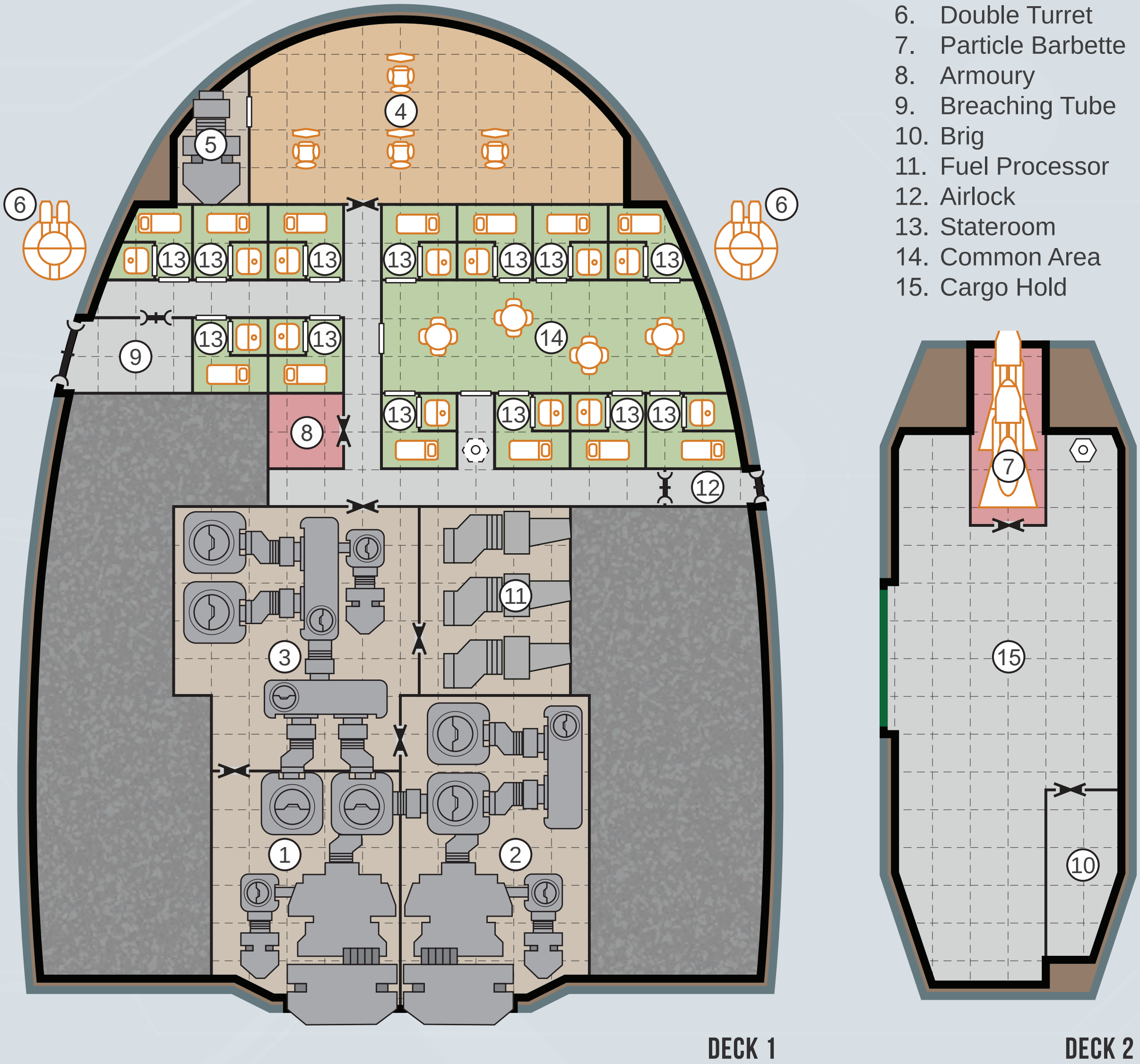


SRSF Customs Cutter

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Double Turret
7. Particle Barbette
8. Armoury
9. Breaching Tube
10. Brig
11. Fuel Processor
12. Airlock
13. Stateroom
14. Common Area
15. Cargo Hold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DECK 1
DECK 2

SRSF PATROL CORVETTE

Built on a 500-ton hull, the SRSF patrol corvette resembles a broad Type-T patrol corvette. The extra displacement allows the addition of a missile barbette which significantly increases the vessel's threat potential. Used to patrol Suerrat Cultural Region space, the patrol corvette serves as an excellent deterrent to pirates and contraband smugglers alike. The additional gig auxiliary craft gives the vessel additional versatility in performing its assignments.

TL15		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	500 tons, Streamlined	—	30
	Reinforced Hull	—	15
Armour	Bonded Superdense, Armour: 8	32	32
M-Drive	Thrust 5	25	50
J-Drive	Jump 3	42	63.75
Power Plant	Fusion (TL15), Power 580	29	58
Fuel Tanks	J-3, 8 weeks operation	156	—
Bridge	Holographic Controls	20	3.13
Computer	Computer/15fib	—	3
Sensors	Advanced	5	5.3
Weapons	Double Turret (beam lasers) x2	2	3
	Double Turret (pulse lasers) x2	2	5
	Missile Barbette	5	4
Ammunition	Missile Storage (100 missiles)	8.3	25
Craft	Docking Space (20 tons)	22	5
	Gig	—	15.9
Systems	Armoury	3	0.75
	Breaching Tube	3	3
	Brig	4	0.5
	Deep Penetration Suite	10	10
	Enhanced Signal Processing	2	8
	Fuel Scoop	—	—
	Fuel Processor (320 tons/day)	16	8
Staterooms	Standard x15	60	0.8
Software	Evade/1	—	1
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Intellect	—	—
	Jump Control/2	—	0.2
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Common Areas		15	1.5
Cargo		38	—
Total: MCr353.83			

Crew

Captain, Officers x2, Pilots x4, Astrogator, Engineers x3, Maintenance x1, Gunners x6, Administrator

Hull: 220

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

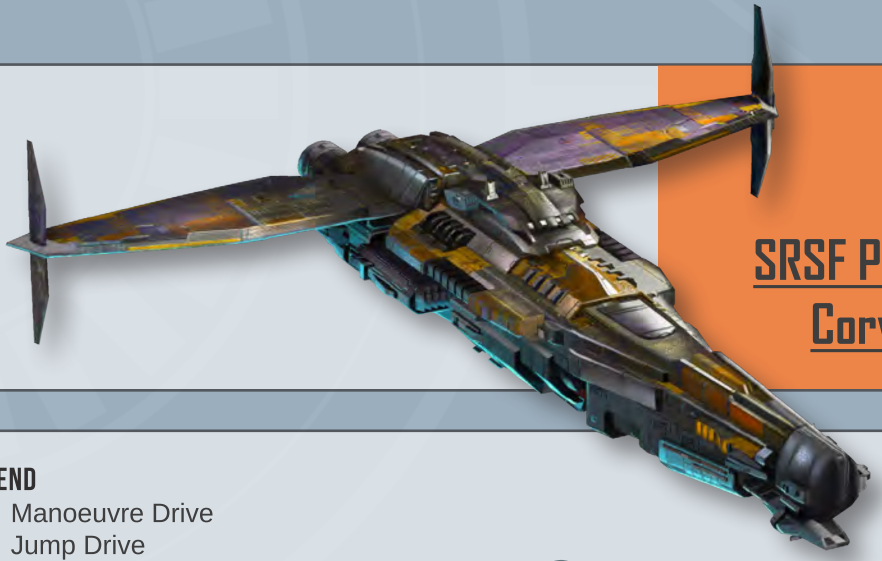
Cr29486/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr353.83

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	100
Manoeuvre Drive	250
Jump Drive	150
Sensors	9
Weapons	36
Fuel Processor	16

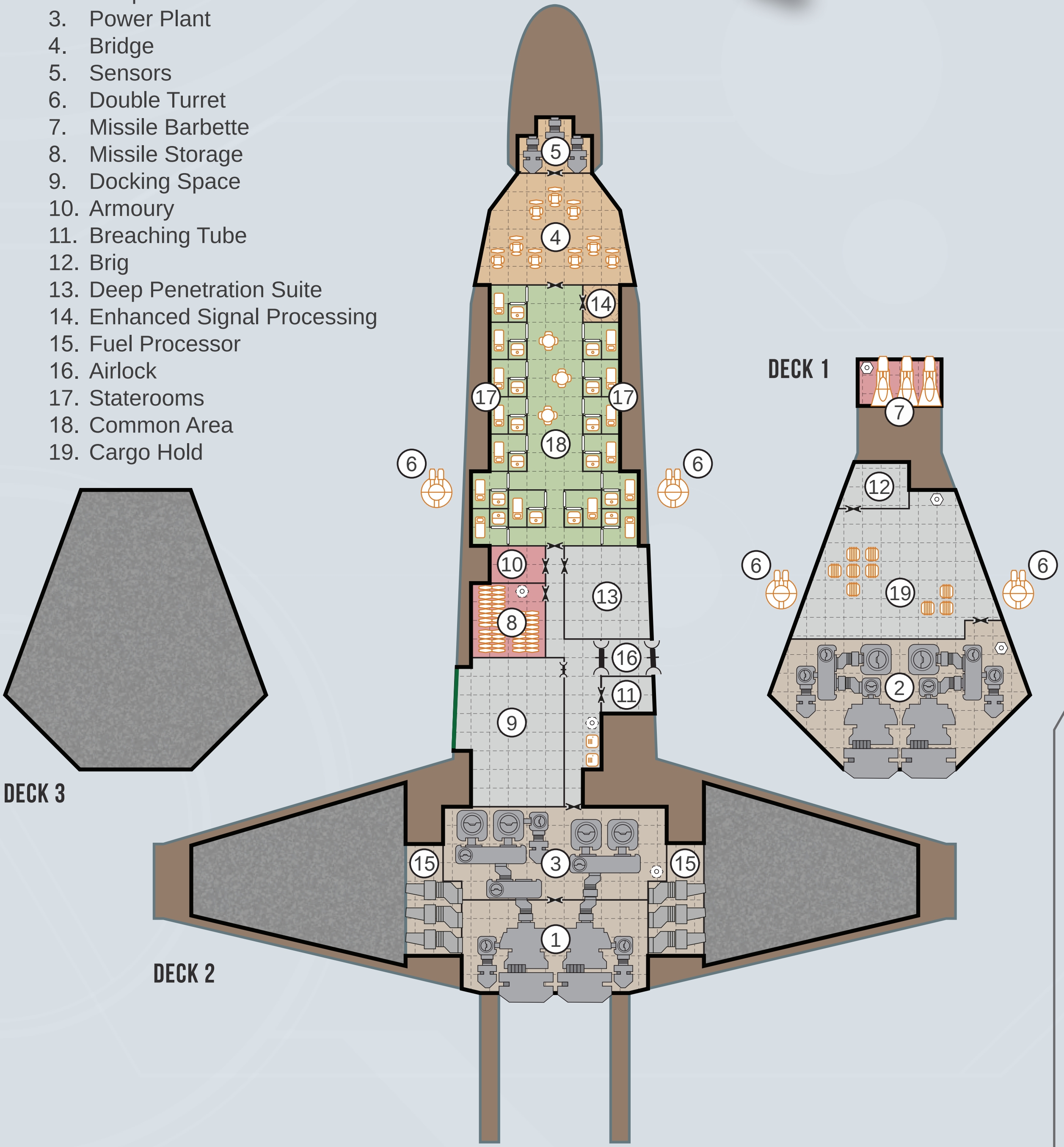


SRSF Patrol Corvette

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Double Turret
7. Missile Barbette
8. Missile Storage
9. Docking Space
10. Armoury
11. Breaching Tube
12. Brig
13. Deep Penetration Suite
14. Enhanced Signal Processing
15. Fuel Processor
16. Airlock
17. Staterooms
18. Common Area
19. Cargo Hold

1 square = 0.5 Ton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DECK 2
DECK 3

BURDEN CONTAINER SHIP

The Burden container ship is a common sight throughout the Suerrat Republic. The design is so popular it has been used as the basis of multiple classes of container ships throughout Charted Space. The burden is a middle-of-the-range vessel, able to carry up to 70 standard 30-ton modular cutter cargo containers for a total of 1,920 tons of cargo. The cargo modules are not accessible when mounted on the ship. When unloaded, the burden is capable of Thrust 2 and jump-2. When fully loaded, its manoeuvre is reduced to Thrust 1 but its jump range remains the same.

The vessel carries two modular cutters to assist in cargo handling. The captain and the first officer are normally afforded a stateroom each while the crew must double up, with the remaining staterooms used for passengers, again doubled up.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	1,240 tons, Close Structure	—	55.8
M-Drive	Thrust 2	31.8	63.6
J-Drive	Jump 2	164	246
Power Plant	Fusion (TL 12), Power 1,005	67	67
Fuel Tanks	J-2, 8 weeks operation	649.7	—
Bridge		40	6.5
Computer	Computer/5bis	—	0.5
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Craft	Docking Space (107 tons)	117.7	26.75
	Modular Cutters x2	—	23.86
Systems	Docking Clamps (Type I) x70	70	27.5
	Fuel Processor (660 tons/day)	33	1.65
Staterooms	Standard x15	60	7.5
Software	Intellect	—	—
	Jump Control/2	—	0.2
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		5.8	
Total: MCr529.86			

Crew

Pilots x5, Astrogator, Engineers x8, Administrator

Hull: 1,399

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr44155/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr529.86

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	248
Manoeuvre Drive	248
Jump Drive	248
Sensors	1
Fuel Processor	33

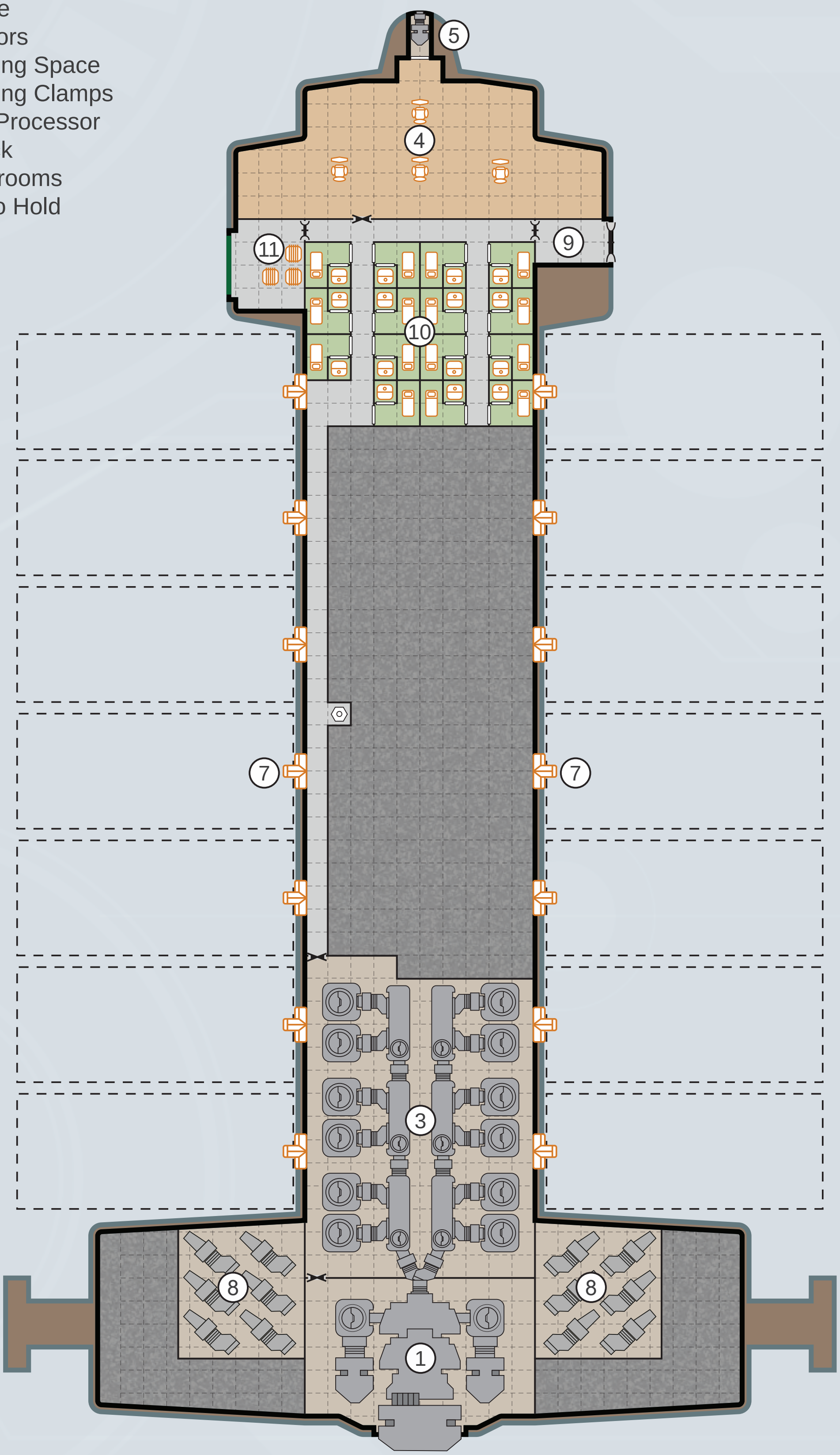
Burden Container Ship

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Docking Space
7. Docking Clamps
8. Fuel Processor
9. Airlock
10. Staterooms
11. Cargo Hold

1 square = 0.5 Ton

DECK 1: FUEL DECK

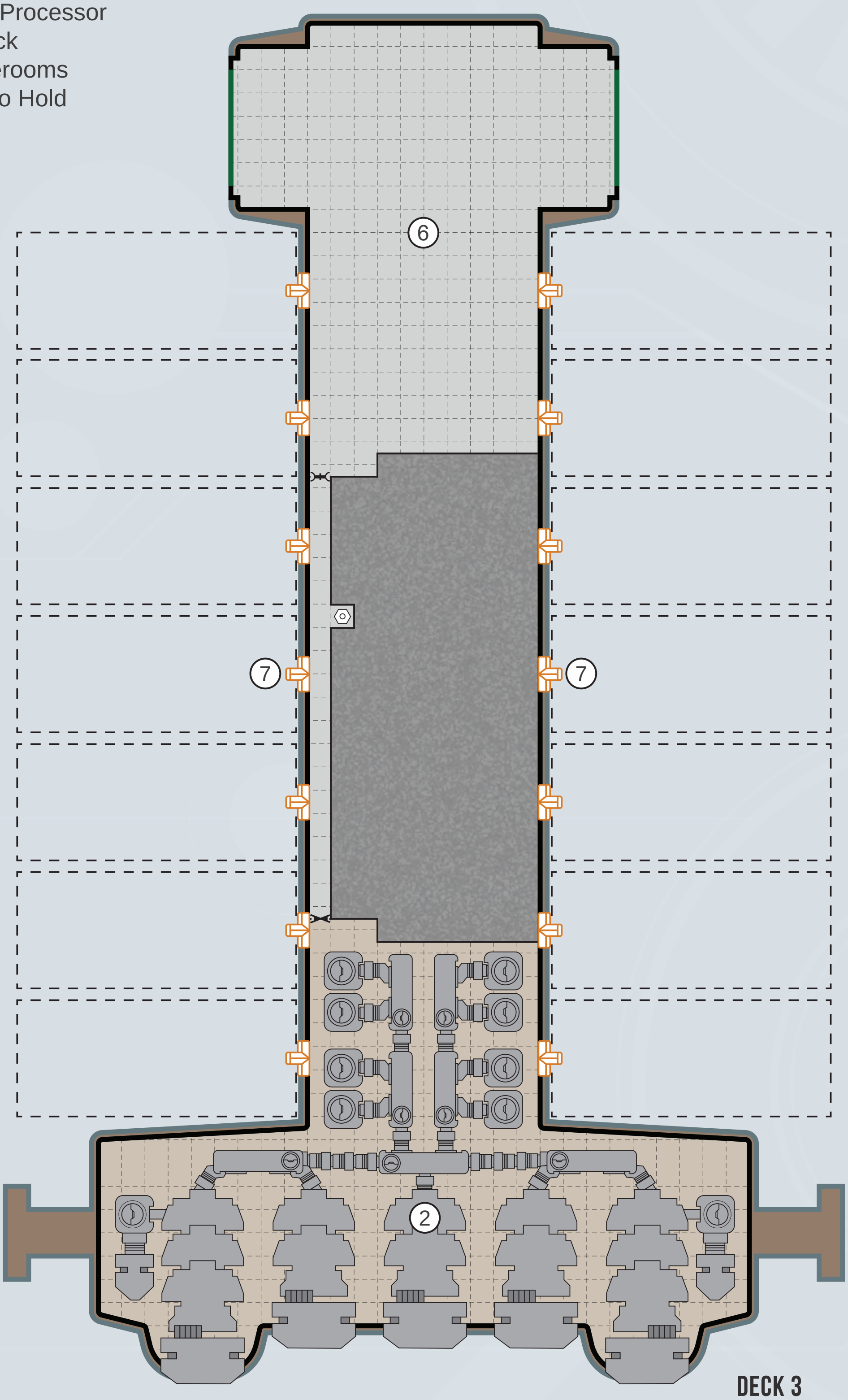


DECK 2

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Docking Space
7. Docking Clamps
8. Fuel Processor
9. Airlock
10. Staterooms
11. Cargo Hold

1 square = 0.5 Ton



DECK 3

THE ZA'TACHK

The Za'tachk – *Za'tachkosapiens Loza'tchis* – were the first alien sophont species the Hivers encountered. They share many characteristics of the Hivers, such as pacifism and cooperation. However, it is uncertain whether this is due to early contact and thus being able to be manipulated for an extended period or just an accident. Outside analysis leans toward a combination of both explanations. While sharing many characteristics with Hivers, they differ in being somewhat timid and lacking individual initiative and curiosity.

The Hiver put the Za'tachk natural tendency towards bureaucracy and organisation to good use and they are the Federation's premier administrators. They can be found on Hiver merchant ships acting as pursers, accountants, bookkeepers and so forth. Although other species also serve in these capacities, Za'tachk are favoured for such work when available and naturally gravitate towards these positions.

PHYSIOLOGY

Za'tachk are a quadrupedal, bilaterally symmetrical species. Proto-Za'tachk evolved as brachiators which rarely ventured to the ground. This led them to use both the fore and rear limbs equally well for movement and grasping. As adults, they are approximately the same size as mature Hivers and weigh roughly the same. Their skin is entirely hairless and has a rough texture on the dorsal surface and a smooth texture on the ventral. Za'tachk skin is deep auburn, with shades of black on the limbs and golden brown on the face, the colouring darker on the dorsal surfaces. Natural chromophores in their skin cause their colouration to fade to white during winter. Za'tachk skin pigments have also been affected by UV radiation, with those native to more tropical climes having developed darker tones to protect them from UV damage, while those coming from colder climates have a lighter skin tone to absorb more UV light.

Za'tachk are heterothermic, meaning they can vary between self-regulating their body temperature or allowing the surrounding environment to affect it. When the external temperature suits Za'tachk comfort, their bodies switch from generating heat to allowing the exterior temperature to regulate body heat. This serves to reduce their energy requirements. When the external temperature drops below suitability, their body again begins generating heat to maintain metabolism.

The species' metabolism switches to external temperature regulation when they sleep, which causes them to enter into a torpor-like state. Sleeping Za'tachk can be difficult to rouse and they tend to be somewhat sluggish until their metabolism switches to internal temperature regulation and their body temperature rises. Za'tachk who wake normally do not suffer from sluggishness, as their body has already changed to internal temperature regulation before they wake.

Za'tachk have a closed respiratory and cardiovascular system. They inspire oxygen and expire carbon dioxide. Za'tachk blood is green due to their oxygen-carrying molecule being similar to chloroquine, which is light green when deoxygenated and darker green when oxygenated. Structurally, the molecule is similar to haemoglobin as it has an iron atom at its centre. Unlike haemoglobin, it is not found in Za'tachk cells but floats in the blood plasma analogue.

This species has an internal skeletal system composed primarily of calcium. The skeleton is a short, relatively inflexible spine attached to two complex structures resembling a shoulder and hip girdle combination. Between these complex structures is a short ribcage which protects the vital internal organs. A short neck leads to the skull.

The hip/shoulders have ball-shaped processes which fit into a cup-shaped socket in the proximal limb bone. A complex capsule of ligaments, tendons and muscle allow the limb to rotate 360 degrees. While the joints initially appear unstable, the thick muscles and tendons protect the joints from dislocation. In healthy Za'tachk, limb dislocation is almost unheard of and is considered an affliction associated with age.

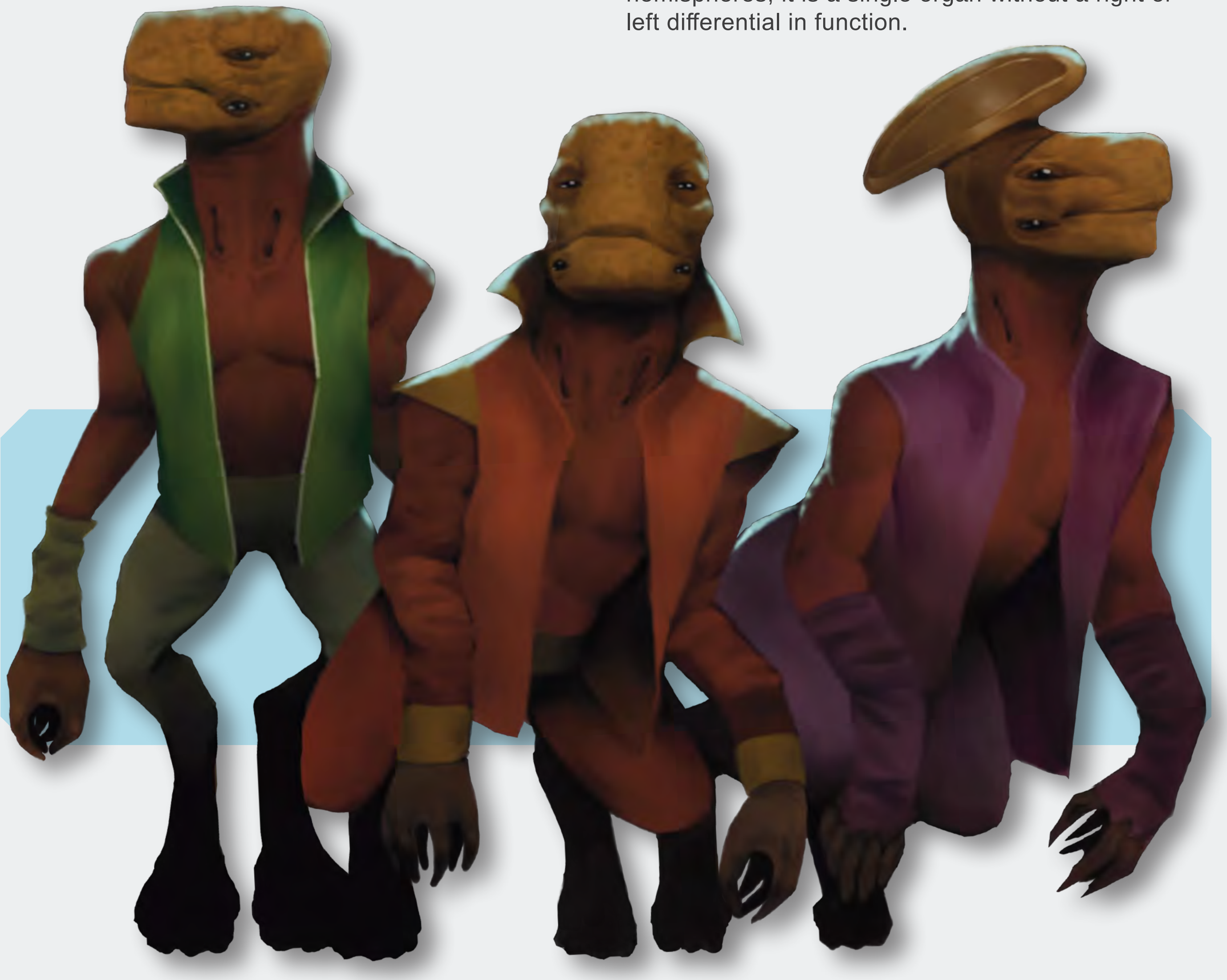
Each limb has four joints analogous to the shoulder, elbow, secondary elbow and wrist. Each joint is highly flexible and able to rotate a full 360 degrees and flex both forwards, backwards and to the sides. Once a highly beneficial train when the Za'tachk were still a brachiating species, this flexibility does come at the price of joint stability. It can occasionally cause problems such as dislocations, sprains and strains.

At the end of each limb is a manipulator, which can serve equally well to support locomotion or fine manipulation. The manipulator possesses six fingers comprised of four joints each. The fingers are equally spaced around the manipulator so that each finger is opposable. When the manipulator is used for locomotion, it is closed into a fist so that the Za'tachk effectively walks on its knuckles.

Za'tachk are most comfortable on all fours. They prefer to walk in a quadrupedal stance unless carrying something and even then will store the object being held in a pouch or backpack, if possible, to free all their limbs for locomotion. Despite this preference, Za'tachk are more than capable of operating bipedally if the situation requires it.

The skull is connected by another ball and socket joint but due to mechanical limitations, the joint is not as flexible as those found on the limbs. The skull is somewhat triangular, broader near the neck and narrow towards the jaws. Four protected orbits holding the eyes are on either side of the head, one pair above the other and one on either side of the jaw. Za'tachk have no teeth. Instead, within their mouth they have bony plates in the upper and lower jaw resembling a beak. At the front of the jaw, the plate is sharp for cutting and tearing, while at the back, it broadens to allow mastication. Za'tachk do not possess a tongue.

The Za'tachk brain is doughnut-shaped and sits vertically in the skull. The optical nerve centres are located at the front of the brain, while the language centre sits within the inner ring. The brain area responsible for pattern recognition is disproportionally large, which accounts for Za'tachks' remarkable organisational ability. Unlike the human brain, the Za'tachk brain is not separated into two hemispheres; it is a single organ without a right or left differential in function.



Internally, the majority of Za'tachk organs are contained within the ribcage. They possess a single, three-chambered heart located centrally within the body. Blood is pumped from the two upper chambers into the pulmonary system, where the blood is oxygenated, and then to the rest of the body. Deoxygenated blood is returned to the lungs, where waste chemicals are removed before returning to the large lower heart chamber.

Breathing is performed through nasal openings in the chest just below the throat. The nasal openings lead directly to a tracheal system that delivers air into the lungs. The lungs are a spherical organ surrounding the heart and deliver oxygen directly via an intricate tracheal system.

Za'tachk have a larynx but do not possess vocal cords. Instead, they have an organ similar to Terran birds called a syrinx within their trachea, which can generate sounds. Specialised sets of syringeal muscles control the movement of the syrinx, including tension on the membranes. Za'tachk use different degrees of tension produced by the syringeal muscles to achieve variety in sounds and tones. Vocalisation is performed through the nostrils, surrounded by a complex muscle structure that allows them to alter their shape and hence the sound emitted. They can produce a far greater octave range than humans. Their voices are melodious and androgynous.

The digestive system consists of an oesophagus that passes through the central brain cavity and leads to an upper stomach used to digest animal proteins and simple nutrients. Plant fibres and other difficult-to-digest nutrients are passed to a second stomach for digestion. The second stomach contains bacteria and other gut flora, which help break down plant matter before passing the chime back into the upper stomach to be passed through to the intestine analogues. The chime travels through the intestines, removing nutrients and fluids before the remains are passed to the colon and eliminated through a cloaca on the body's underside.

Za'tachk can convey a vast range of subtle messages when used in conjunction with their spoken language. Along with their spoken language, Za'tachk have several glands around their cloaca, which secrete pheromones. The pheromones convey various physical and emotional states experienced by Za'tachk; they are detected by specialised organs within the lining of the mouth and nasal passages, which can differentiate between the type and quantity. Za'tachk constantly emit pheromones, giving them a pleasant body odour, which some say resembles ylang-ylang.

Za'tachk senses are mainly analogous to human senses. They hear through two ear openings on each side of the skull covered by tympanic membranes. Both smell and taste are as acute as a human, although the chemoreceptors in their nasal passages are sensitive to the pheromones used for communication. Scent can be detected through the nasal cavities and the mouth; a Za'tachk trying to catch a smell will hold its mouth open in a wide grin. The tastebuds in their upper and lower jaw lining are more attuned to bitter flavours than sweet ones.

Za'tachk eyes are large and more sensitive along the infrared spectrum to adequately see under the light of their home planet's sun, a K2 V red dwarf. This adaption makes Za'tachk particularly sensitive to bright light but with excellent vision in the dark.

Za'tachk have three sexes and are sexually dimorphic. They have a complex and flexible reproductive pattern – with two subsidiary sexes: the '*oygui*' scout and the '*oysgui*' homesteader. Scouts average 1.3 metres from the ground to the upraised head and weigh approximately 140 kilograms. The homesteader averages 1.3 metres from the floor to the top of their upraised head and only weighs around 130 kilograms. The third sex, the '*ohyugua*' matriarch, stands on average 1.5 metres from the ground to the top of their upraised head and weighs 145 kilograms. Viewing the nature of the three sexes in the context of social insects rather than 'male' and 'female' is helpful. The scouts are analogous to soldier ants, the homesteaders to worker ants and the matriarchs to queens. Unlike ants, the soldiers are 'male' because they cannot gestate young, while the workers and queens are 'female'.

Each sex has reproductive organs located within the cloaca. Mating is achieved by the Za'tachk pressing their bellies together so their cloacas 'kiss'. Whilst embraced in a cloacal kiss, scouts transfer gametes to either of their partners and homesteaders may receive gametes from a scout or transfer gametes to a matriarch partner. In the exchange of gametes, many are exchanged and fertilised. The gametes travel to the uterus, where they try to attach to the uterine wall. Only one gamete will be successful, after which a hormonal change occurs in the uterine lining to prevent further gametes from implanting. Gametes that do not successfully implant are stored in an organ beside the uterus, enter metabolic suspension and may be released later to produce more offspring.

Matriarchs, scouts and homesteaders all carry triploid genes, which can fuse in either diploid – two gametes fusing – or triploid – three gametes fusing – fashion. However, diploid offspring are sterile mules. Thus, a scout and homesteader could mate but will only produce a sterile version of either sex. Likewise, a matriarch could mate with a scout or homesteader in a diploid coupling but the results would be sterile scouts or homesteaders.

Both matriarchs and homesteaders can control the sex of their young. Impregnated homesteaders give birth to a homesteader or scout after six months of gestation. Matriarchs can also give birth to a homesteader or scout simultaneously. Matriarchs are the only sex that can produce young matriarchs, which are gestated for 12 months. Matriarch young are always the result of triploid mating.

Za'tachk only mate for reproductive purposes when the right pheromones are produced. All Za'tachk produce pheromones that influence when fertile community members produce mature gametes based on the group's needs. This had the effect of controlling the population of primitive groups and controlling the fertility of any young produced.

Single births are the norm in Za'tachk, although twins are not unheard of and triplets are rare. In all cases of multiple births, the young will result from a fertilised gamete's initial cell division splitting completely into two or three separate zygotes instead of remaining as a single ball of cells. This results in the young of such occurrences being identical.

All three sexes can feed the young. They have pseudo-mammary organs on their underside, which secrete a nourishing semi-liquid onto their belly skin.

LIFESPAN

Za'tachk young are born almost entirely helpless and require intense care from their parents for the first several years. While all three Za'tachk sexes can nurse young, this task is usually reserved for the homesteaders except for a young matriarch, who is nursed only by their matriarch mother.

Young are typically weaned at the age of two years old. At this point, the young can walk and have begun to speak individual words and string them into simple sentences. They are introduced to solid foods and, within another year, the young have gained a small level of independence.

Once scouts and homesteaders reach the age of three, they begin their formal education. Formal institutions dedicated to the education of youngsters are commonplace in Za'tachk communities. Infertile scouts and homesteaders usually complete their education at 10, after which they enter the workforce. It is rare for an infertile scout or homesteader to pursue further education, such as college or university.

Fertile scouts and homesteaders also complete their primary education at 10. Unlike their infertile nest mates, fertile scouts and homesteaders frequently pursue advanced education at college or university. Those who head directly into the workforce after primary education often obtain further education through their line of work.

Young Matriarchs do not begin their primary education until they are five, completed by the time they are 13 years old. From there, young matriarchs are expected to pursue advanced education at a college or university to gain the skills necessary for their future roles as society's leaders. It is highly unheard of for a young matriarch to forgo advanced education, which the community sees as laziness and lacking leadership potential.

The scout and homesteader young routinely remain in parental care until they reach the age of 10 years. Matriarchs remain in parental care until they are 15 years old.

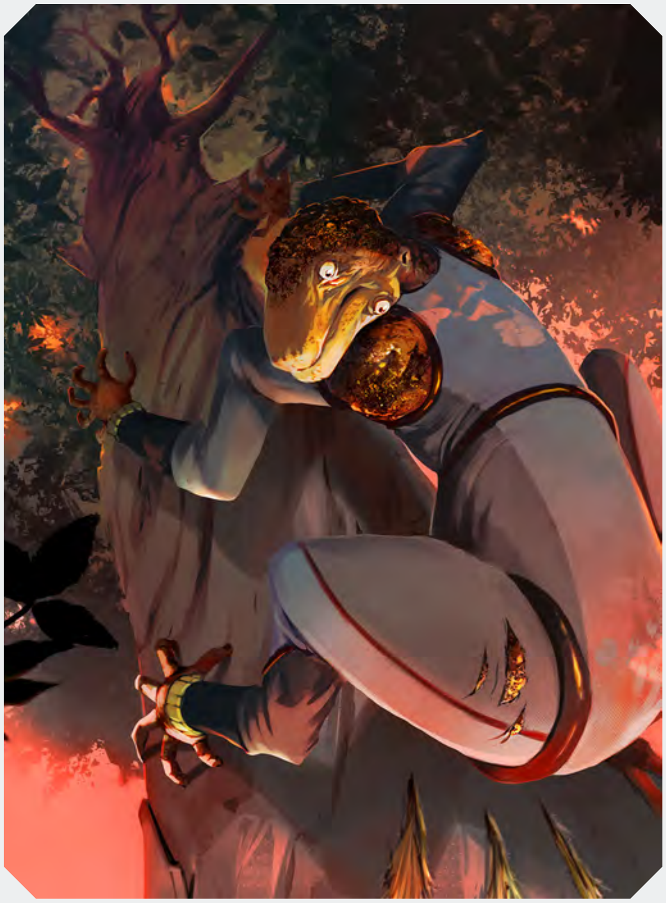
Fertile scouts and homesteaders are in their prime from 10 to 35. After, they age rapidly and rarely live beyond the age of 50. Infertile scout and homesteader lives are tragically short, being in their prime from 10 to 20 and rapidly ageing before dying at around 30. Matriarchs are considered in their prime from 15 to 60 and can live beyond 100. As in other species, anagathics can significantly lengthen this lifespan.

DIET

Za'tachk are omnivores. They enjoy many foods but prefer plant-based foods over animal proteins. Most meals consist primarily of plants with a small proportion of animal protein derived primarily from insect analogues, although other forms of protein are also occasionally enjoyed.

The plant life on Za'tachk is toxic, with the severity of the toxin varying by plant species, which can be detected by bitterness in the plant's flavour. Proto-Za'tachk evolved sensitive bitterness preceptors in their mouth lining to assist them in discerning which plants contain the least amount of toxin via the intensity of their bitterness. To further aid in the digestion of plant toxins, proto-Za'tachk consumed clay which lined their stomachs and bound with the toxins, allowing them to pass through the digestive system and be eliminated safely.

Young Za'tachk are particularly vulnerable to plant toxins, so their diet is restricted to the least toxic plants in their early years. Clay forms a substantial part of their diet to combat the ingested toxicity.



Modern Za'tachk have the processing technology to remove toxins from plant matter before consumption. Despite this, they prefer not to eat such heavily processed foods and continue to rely on consuming clay.

Clay is most often consumed mixed with a liquid to form viscous mud. Common fluids used as a mixer include water, milk and, occasionally, animal blood. The drink can be served flavoured or natural, depending on the liquid the clay is mixed with, and drunk either warm or cold.

Insect analogues are the favoured form of animal protein eaten by Za'tachk. They also enjoy eggs, fish and milk produced by some animals. These foods comprise approximately 20% of the Za'tachk diet.

Unlike many sophonts, Za'tachk have no rituals around the consumption of food. There are no standard mealtimes, nor is there a tendency to gather together with the sole intention of eating. Instead, Za'tachk graze throughout the day, eating when hungry, regardless of where they are and what they are doing. To the outside observer, Za'tachk seem to be constantly eating.

This has led to a culture where food is always available. Za'tachk always carry food with them as a matter of course and every Za'tachk gathering will include a selection of foods to graze upon, regardless of the formality of the gathering.

PSYCHOLOGY

In many ways, Za'tachk share some of the psychological traits of Hivers but generally not to as great an extent. Za'tachk are non-aggressive, pacifistic and highly cooperative. These traits were present in the Za'tachk before contact with the Hivers and may have been exaggerated through Hiver manipulation after contact.

Za'tachk will avoid aggression – be it physical, emotional or mental – if at all possible. As they evolved from arboreal ancestors, Za'tachk will seek to escape acts of aggression by achieving higher ground to make themselves unreachable. 'Higher ground' may not necessarily mean physically climbing a tree or hill – although those actions are certainly warranted in the case of physical aggression – but also includes such things as seeking a higher moral ground, turning to more accepted and proven theories, or falling back on the way things have always been done.

Za'tachk who are unable to reach higher ground in the face of aggression will act defensively to protect the most vulnerable parts of their body by assuming a position known as '*atucucundrunia*' – dropping to the ground, tucking their limbs and head under their body and remaining in that position until the threat or danger has passed. In extreme peril, retreating to this position may also be accompanied by a state of catatonia, where the Za'tachk cannot be communicated or reasoned with until they feel safe.

This lack of aggression also manifests in Za'tachk lack of initiative and curiosity. Za'tachk find both initiative and curiosity to be hazardous behaviours that could easily lead to dangerous situations. This lack of enterprise is not voluntary but is a deep-seated psychological trait. Za'tachk are not known for any significant scientific advances, social reformation or great endeavours.

The psychological desire to avoid aggression and danger are so great in Za'tachk that society considers those who show less aversion to conflict or dangerous situations mentally unwell. These individuals are looked upon with pity. As Za'tachk take particular care of whom amongst them reproduces, they are also prohibited from breeding. Those who show the least aversion, or worse, seek out conflict, are confined to institutions for the insane where they will pose no risk to themselves or others. Despite this, Za'tachk are not above utilising these individuals when dealing with dangerous situations deemed too risky for sane members of society.

Za'tachk have never warred amongst themselves, as their lack of aggression has led to a naturally pacifistic mindset. When unknown groups of Za'tachk encountered each other, it was natural for the more senior matriarch from the groups to automatically assume leadership of both. Any subordinate queens would automatically and instinctually accept the new leader, then rearrange their positions within the new structure based on seniority.

Like the Hivers they resemble in many ways, the Za'tachk are very alien to a human perspective. While individual Za'tachk are individual sophonts, their psychology and social behaviour is highly structured and stylised, making them frequently appear to humans as programmed automatons rather than independent individual sophonts.

This tendency is apparent in the almost slavish obedience the scouts and homesteaders have towards the wishes and desires of matriarchs. Scouts and homesteaders are psychologically unable to disobey the commands of a matriarch. To do so will most often result in the scout or homesteader retreating into atucucundrunia to combat the sense of internal turmoil they feel. In the case of scouts or homesteaders receiving conflicting orders from different matriarchs, they will follow the orders of the most senior matriarch or the one with whom they have the closest familial relationship.

Za'tachk are also psychologically limited by their sex concerning their positions within the community. Matriarchs are the leaders and decision-makers. Scouts and homesteaders specialise in the daily support of the community. Scout roles are limited to exploration, hunting, defence, policing and heavy labour. Homesteader roles are limited to administration, education, child-rearing, crafts, management and the distribution of essential goods and services. Za'tachk appear to be unable to deviate from their sexually defined roles. Forcing a Za'tachk into positions or to behave beyond their sexually defined parameters causes a great deal of stress and discomfort and may more than likely lead to atucucundrunia.

SOCIETY

Their psychology heavily influences Za'tachk society. Given their obsession with order, it naturally follows that their society is highly structured, with roles and responsibilities designated by both sex and fertility.

MATRIARCHY

Za'tachk society is singularly matriarchal in nature. The matriarchs are the centre of society and the community's leaders. The base group structure is always the same. Leading the system is a singular or council of fertile matriarchs. Below them are a group of courtiers of favoured fertile scouts and homesteaders of the fertile matriarchs. Below the courtiers are other fertile scouts and homesteaders, and the final rung in the hierarchy is the scout and homesteader mules.

Older matriarchs who are beyond the age of reproduction also participate in the role of leadership. They represent an elite faction of leaders with highly respected and admired knowledge and wisdom. It is not unusual to find the highest levels of leadership in Za'tachk communities to be led by a council of these older matriarchs.

This rigid structure is repeated throughout Za'tachk society, from planetary civilisations to the smallest businesses and community groups. Matriarchs will always lead. Junior matriarchs support senior matriarchs. Matriarchs will always lead homesteaders and scouts and fertile sexes will always lead mules. This structure is one that Za'tachk are genetically predisposed to and cannot deviate from without significant stress and psychological discomfort. Those Za'tachk who work away from their fellows will always seek to discover who is superior and subordinate to them so they know precisely where they fit into the social hierarchy.

This social structure tends to Za'tachk organisations being controlled, operated and staffed by individuals who are related to each other in some way.

NESTS

Za'tachk do not have the same concept of family as many other sophonts. Za'tachk have no concept of marriage and their notion of familial connections are atypical. Whether their biological mother is a homesteader or matriarch, Za'tachk view their mother as the most senior related matriarch in the community. This leads to entire communities considering one of its leading matriarchs as their mother. This is not an erroneous or fanciful belief; as Za'tachk communities grow, it is most likely that all its members are the descendants of the leading matriarchs.

A Za'tachk group, called a 'nest', always consists of at least one mature matriarch, a minimum of one fertile scout and homesteader, and any unattached young produced. This is the minimum number for a nest and will often include many more individuals. Any infertile young produced by the family tend to remain with the family and rarely strike out independently.

Young fertile scouts and homesteaders who have reached adulthood are ready to leave the nest and join another. Young matriarchs take longer to mature. When she does, she produces pheromones which announce to the community that she is receptive to receiving mates. In the past, this resulted in a receptive matriarch being approached by a plethora of suitors. The choice of appropriate suitors was as much a matter of individual taste as it was of pheromonal compatibility. A fertile matriarch may takes as many mating partners as she likes. Successful scouts and homesteaders remained with the matriarch, while unsuccessful suitors returned to their home nests.

While Za'tachk can and do feel romantic love, they believe it has no place in the formation of breeding groups. Love is reserved for the infertile and the young.

Individuals may remain within the relationship for as long as they like but must register their unattached status if they leave it.

Suiters offer small bright, gaudy gifts and trinkets to a receptive matriarch to impress her. The offerings are ritualistically presented to the matriarch in a manner very reminiscent of the courtship dances of some Terran birds. While it appears the matriarch chooses suitors whose gifts please her the most, in reality, the choice is heavily influenced by which suiters' pheromones that resonate most strongly in the matriarch.

Before the development of cities, the reproduction rate within Za'tachk communities was controlled by the pheromones given off by all fertile members of society. The exact mechanism by which this operates is still largely unknown and unconsciously initiated by the fertile community. It is suspected to be a combination of population pressures, the requirements of the community and the amount of work available. Personal desire to reproduce also has some bearing on the mechanism but how much is not definitively known. There have been circumstances where Za'tachk have successfully reproduced through the sheer desire to do so but this is a rare exception to the norm and is seen as somewhat obscene by the larger community.

As settlements grew and population pressures swelled, reliance on mating pheromones proved too chaotic, leading to explosive overpopulation. This led to the establishment of councils or committees to oversee the rate of reproduction and which matched suitable Za'tachk with each other as well as monitoring and recording the number of Za'tachk in the community. When an increase in population was required, the committees issued the authority to reproduce to selected nests. While the pheromones produced by the fertile community members still affect the need to reproduce subconsciously, doing so without authority provided by the government is illegal.

This arrangement has continued in modern Za'tachk communities. The Bureau of Population keeps a census of all Za'tachk and their bloodlines and ensures the best-matched Za'tachk are brought together into nests and issues reproduction authority. Through this bureaucratic process, all Za'tachk communities have a similar population breakdown of 60% infertile scouts and homesteaders, 30% fertile scouts and homesteaders and 10% matriarchs.

STRUCTURE

Structure is fundamental to the Za'tachk. Their biology-based society makes Za'tachk predisposed to strong organisation and laws. Za'tachk have laws for everything ranging from how the government is operated down to the naming conventions of the young.

Disorganisation, untidiness and chaos are anathema to Za'tachk. Such things are not just to be avoided; they are not tolerated. Every Za'tachk knows precisely where they stand in society, what they are expected to do and how they will do it. Za'tachk are masters of micromanagement and see it as a character strength rather than a flaw.

Homesteaders and matriarchs are the most adept in organisation and structure, forming the bulk of the Hive Federation's famed Za'tachk bureaucrats. As the Hivers feel this is a highly desirable trait in a subordinate, the Federation publicly admires the Za'tachk.

PACIFISM

Pacifism is a natural outgrowth of Za'tachk timidity. Za'tachk pacifism and timidity should not be confused with a refusal to defend themselves – Za'tachk are more than capable of such actions as long as it is safe for them to do so. This apparent contradiction can be explained by looking at how primitive Za'tachk reacted when confronted by violence.

Za'tachk view height as safety. The first reaction of a threatened Za'tachk is to flee and retreat to higher ground, such as a hill or tree. While retreating, they would release threat and danger pheromones to alert those around them and to attract scouts who would act to defend them. If Za'tachk could not retreat to higher ground or flee, they would protect themselves by assuming the '*atucucundrunia*' position. Scouts would also seek higher ground and attack the source of the threat with spears or stones from a safe distance, carefully avoiding direct physical contact. Threats were dealt with as far from the nest as possible. Scout groups would be dispatched to patrol nest territory for threats and dangers to dispatch, thereby protecting the rest of the community from any potential future risk. In this manner, the Za'tachk would create a safe and peaceful environment by eliminating any threat before it could threaten the individual or the community.

Hiver manipulation in the past has reduced the Za'tachk tendency to eliminate all threats before they could pose a problem. Modern Za'tachk still deal with threatening situations proactively but they prefer peaceful means, such as diplomacy, relocation and so forth. When all forms of peaceful resolution have proven ineffectual, Za'tachk will use whatever means necessary to illuminate the source of the danger in a safe and long-distance manner.

It is not surprising that some cultures view Za'tachk pacifism as cowardice. Za'tachk would argue that it is entirely logical, in fact philanthropic, to eliminate a potential threat before it can pose any danger to the individual or the community at large.

BELIEFS

Za'tachk are an interesting species, mostly monolithic in their beliefs, customs and worldview. Where other sophonts will have a range of views shared by their populace and individuals may differ significantly from the norm, the same cannot be said of the Za'tachk.

The Za'tachk have no religious beliefs and do not practice the worship of ancestors or supernatural entities. They do not believe in an afterlife but feel their essence continues within their offspring and the community. Instead of a traditional belief system, their desire for order borders on religious fanaticism. Disorder is seen not only as contrary to the good of the community but as unethical and immoral.

Despite their lack of religion or a belief in an afterlife, Za'tachk practice a form of cannibalism where they ritually consume the bodies of their deceased relatives. This ritual, known as '*Vecwruaki*', is seen as the deceased individual making one last contribution to the nest by providing nourishment. Vecwruaki is a profoundly private affair, practised only by the deceased's fellow nest members and is never discussed with outsiders. To raise the ritual with Za'tachk is in poor taste but deeply offensive.

The consumption of the deceased individual is a highly formal rite. Before the consumption begins, the nest members of the dead step away from their public lives, forgoing work and social obligation. They spend this time with their nestmates remembering the deceased and their contributions to the nest and the community in a ritual known as '*paarvecwruaki*', which means 'Before Returning'. During this time, it is not unusual for friends and acquaintances of the deceased to visit the nest and contribute their memories of them.

While paarvecwruaki is being performed, the deceased's body is prepared by individuals known as '*dutanskpaarvuaki*' or 'the shepherds of returning', trained in the ritual methods of corpse preparation passed down from the earliest periods of recorded history. Once paarvecwruaki is complete, the dutanskpaarvuaki guides the nest in consuming the departed. The sex and the position held by members of the nest dictate which parts of the corpse are consumed and in what order. The consumption is accompanied by traditional chants which extol the deceased's virtue and highlight their body's return to the nest for the good of their nestmates. Once the vecruaki is complete, the surviving relatives return to their everyday lives. The deceased is rarely mentioned again after vecruaki and when they are, their cognomen is replaced with the word '*-vecruakeen*', meaning 'One who has returned'.

The closest concept to a religion found among the Za'tachk is their desire for order brought about by strict and closely managed organisation. This obsession, firmly rooted in their psychology, is reinforced in all young Za'tachk in the nest and through educational institutions. Other sophonts may find Za'tachk adherence to order obsessive but it has given Za'tachk a reputation as the best administrators within the Hive Federation and perhaps beyond.

Za'tachk believe that every member of their society has a specified role to play for society to function effectively and efficiently. Related to their need for order is their need for industriousness. An individual who does not fulfil their role or proves to be lacking in industriousness is seen as a burden upon society.

This belief has led to the Za'tachk having a rather dim view towards the unemployed and supporting those who are not succeeding. No charitable foundations help support the poor or the unemployed among Za'tachk, nor is there a public welfare or benefits system for those who find themselves out of work or unemployable.

Interestingly, due to the nature of the way they reproduce, Za'tachk communities rarely have an issue with people experiencing poverty or unemployment. Every community member has a productive role to perform, or a position is found where their services can be utilised and they can contribute to society.

Za'tachk consider timidity and cowardice to indicate intelligence and, ultimately, sophoncy. To their way of thinking, a sentient species would naturally hold their personal safety of the highest importance, so it only stands to reason that a sophont species would be exceedingly timid and wary of threats to their continued wellbeing.

Similarly, Za'tachk believe bravery is a mental affliction similar to insanity. Those considered profoundly insane are seen as a genuine risk to the community. Despite this viewpoint, those less timid than the average Za'tachk have a use within the community. They are put to work in roles that require insanity to be successful. Due to their psychological makeup, many of those considered insane belong to the scout sex, as it falls to them the duties of defence. An insane – read brave – scout greatly benefits the community. Likewise, those matriarchs and homesteaders who show bravery are the ones who are most often employed in roles along with other species. These are the Za'tachk that aliens most often interact with the most.

Za'tachk have a strong connection to the number three. They believe three is a fortuitous number – it requires three Za'tachk to mate together to produce fertile offspring. Three represents stability and continuation, considered the minimum number of individuals necessary to give any venture a chance of success. This belief has extended into all aspects of Za'tachk life. Three matriarchs head all bureaus, three leaders lead all businesses except for the very smallest and all committees have memberships divisible by three. Even such positions as the captain of a starship, or the leaders of Za'tachk governments, are held by three individuals. Each of the three leaders of an organisation are considered equal and all decisions are made by reaching a consensus between them. When an agreement cannot be reached, the wishes of two-thirds of the triad are taken as the consensus.

Three is such an important number to the Za'tachk that it can be found almost anywhere within their society. Buildings are always constructed comprising of levels in multiples of three, the seats in vehicles are always a multiple of three, streets always have three lanes, gifts are always given in threes, their numbering system has a base of three and diplomatic envoys always consist of a number divisible by three. Even their insults are affected by their fascination with the number three. Wishing an individual to 'never to amount to three' is a grave offence and bestowing less than three gifts on an individual is a shocking affront.

While multiple births among the Za'tachk are a rarity, triplets being an almost unheard-of event, the birth of triplets is seen as highly auspicious. Triplets are considered both lucky and fortuitous. They are said to be harbingers of grand events and have great expectations placed upon them.

GOVERNMENT

Za'tachk worlds, in the vast majority, tend towards bureaucratic governments with voluminous yet consistent, helpful and thorough sets of regulations to be followed. Za'tachk governments control every aspect of life from birth to death.

The highest level of Za'tachk government is the Za'tachk Alignment – an interstellar polity within the Hive Federation. An independent world government governs most planets within the Alignment. A planet will often be divided into several Regions, which a regional governor and her council oversee. Regions are further broken down into Districts with their own governors and councils and, finally, Nests with a governor and council. Each governor reports to the governor above them, ultimately back to the planetary government, which report to the Alignment government.

A council of matriarchs heads government, with three of their number chosen as the figureheads of the government, known as the Rearmost Secretaries. Each matriarch is responsible for a portfolio, such as finance, environment, foreign affairs, internal affairs, defence and so on. Each matriarch has a staff of subordinate matriarchs responsible for a department of their superior's portfolio. Further rungs within the government are subdivided down through the rungs of management and finishing with the workers, who are generally infertile scouts or homesteaders. Fertile scouts and homesteaders fill the positions of middle and low management in the structure.

In the distant past, government positions were kept within families. Matriarchs would inherit their posts from their parent or grandparent. As civilisation grew and spread, this manner of filling governmental roles proved to not necessarily place the best decision-makers in positions of power. Obtaining government positions was altered from inheritance to skill and qualification to rectify this.

To enter government service, a Za'tachk must sit an exam to prove their ability to perform to a high standard. Successful applicants are then placed in low-level governmental positions with the possibility of promotion for those who show promise. This has led to an education system focusing on schooling students in the skills required for government service. The number of exams and their difficulty have increased in time, with commensurate education being provided by the government to prepare students to enter government service. This structure has remained largely unchanged from its inception to the present.

The number of exams a modern Za'tachk must sit to enter and advance within governments varies from planet-to-planet and sometimes from region to district to sector. Regardless of the number of exams necessary, the Za'tachk government is no longer one of hereditary progression but one based on the merits of the individual.

LAW

Za'tachk seldom intentionally break laws, even inadvertently, but visitors to their worlds sometimes do. Therefore, authorities retain small police forces to deal with such matters. On predominantly Za'tachk worlds, the police are composed of scouts but often employ other Federation species on more cosmopolitan worlds. On Za'tachk worlds, police rarely use lethal weaponry in their duties. Instead, they use a '*kaath*' device, which fires an electrical induction beam that stimulates the brain's pleasure centre. The result of being hit by a kaath is the feeling of instant and total ecstasy, which sends the target into spasms of uncontrollable pleasure, rendering them helpless for a brief time.

Za'tachk governments want to be seen as responsible and trustworthy. The majority of Za'tachk laws govern how bureaucracies operate, ensuring there is no corruption and all decisions and actions taken are transparent. Other laws dictating property ownership and objects are also clearly codified to provide transparency.

The most serious laws govern the threat and actual harm to individuals and groups. Considering Za'tachk timidity, it is not surprising they hold the life and wellbeing of the individual in high regard, which naturally extends to the group.

Za'tachk law assumes an individual is innocent until proven guilty. They utilise lawyers to defend or prosecute the accused. Lawyers are highly knowledgeable in the Za'tachk legal system. Individuals unable to afford a lawyer are forced to represent themselves. Za'tachk courts do not tolerate legal trickery in any form and the use of which draws severe penalties.

Trials are always heard by Matriarchs well versed in law and do not include a jury – there is no concept of being judged by your peers among Za'tachk. The number of matriarchs who hear a case depends on the severity of the case. A minor infraction may be heard by a trio of judges, whereas a major case may have a panel of up to 21 judges. In every case, there will always be an odd number of judges on a panel. A simple majority ascertains guilt.

The government dictates punishments depending on the severity of the crime. Walking in a forbidden area might bring a small fine, while stealing another's possessions may cause some time in internment. Threatening or causing harm to another brings the most severe punishments, including lengthy gaol sentences and forced rehabilitation. Those who repeatedly threaten or harm others are seen as beyond rehabilitation and are sentenced to execution which is performed quickly and painlessly.

DRESS, ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Za'tachk do not dress for humility – they have no qualms against nudity. Instead, Za'tachk dress to decorate themselves as a form of rank display and self-expression. They will dress in protective clothing when necessary, however.

Clothing commonly comprises a jacket covering the back but leaving the nostrils at the front of the torso sides free so the Za'tachk may breathe and talk. Short stockings covering the upper, lower or entirety of the limbs and a decorative hat or head covering complete the ensemble. Jewellery such as bracelets, armbands and chokers are also standard and are coordinated with the rest of the outfit. Za'tachk rarely wear anything to cover their manipulators except to protect them from dangerous environments.

Higher ranking Za'tachk will advertise their position by the style and expense of their clothing. Za'tachk prefer their clothing to be simple yet elegant. No differentiation is given to the clothing worn by any sexes – all sexes can equally wear any clothing. Materials used are normally soft and comfortable, with those able to afford more expensive materials happily doing so. Materials tend to be brightly coloured and can be of a single colour or bear simple or complex patterns.

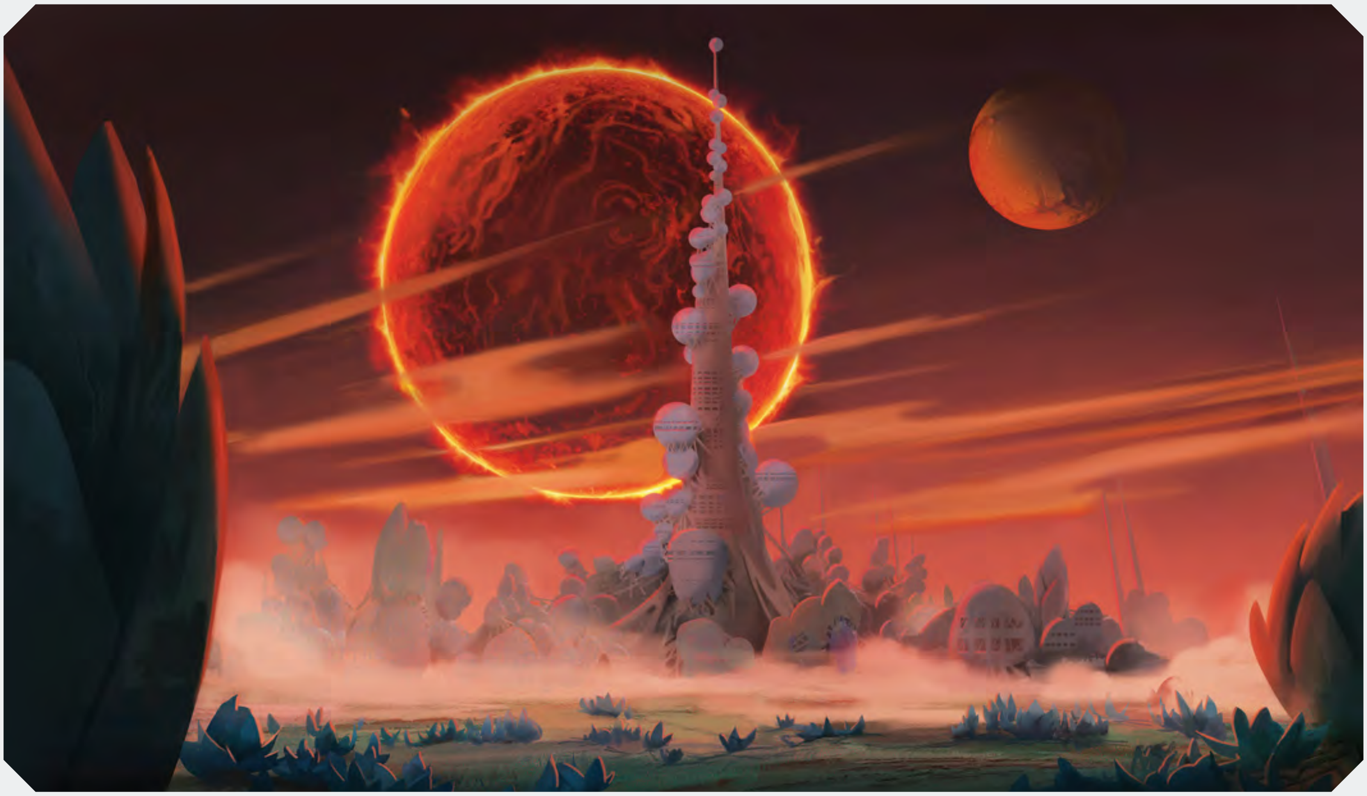
Za'tachk produce many forms of art but all of it is representational without embellishments or creative additions. Their paintings, drawings and sculptures are completely photorealistic, depicting the subject matter exactly as it was when the composition was made. While there is no doubting the skill involved in creating such life-like representations, connoisseurs in the art world note that Za'tachk visual art lacks emotion and soul. No artistic movements are found in developing their craft, except the evolution towards more realistic styles. An art lover will not find experimentation in cubism, expressionism, Impressionism or other forms of artistic styles among the Za'tachk other than realism. Za'tachk see no point in art which is not identical to the subject and they do not understand other species' non-realistic art styles.

Furthermore, Za'tachk can see the artistic value just as easily in an exquisitely executed portrait as in an equally exquisite composition of a city map or a public transport diagram – a painting of a beautiful landscape holds as much value to them as a diagram of a subway network or a reproduction of a superbly organised flowchart.

An aspect of Za'tachk art not found in many other sophonts' art is the incorporation of heat emitters in their work. As Za'tachk vision extends into the infrared spectrum, for their art to be truly representational, their art must also convey the heat, or lack thereof, of the subject at the time of the composition. This technique was introduced as the Za'tachk had access to electronics and has continued to develop to the modern day, where paintings, drawings and sculptures include hidden heat emitters to engage the Za'tachk sense of sight fully.

Za'tachk music is also described as rather soulless by critics. Za'tachk utilise several wind and percussion instruments in their music but their compositions are strictly mathematical and follow long-held traditional structures.

During their evolution, Za'tachk lived in extremely close proximity to each other and continued to live closely as their population grew. Za'tachk feel comfortable and safe in large groups where other sophonts would feel claustrophobic and overcrowded. Za'tachk also do not feel the need for personal space or time alone. Being alone means nobody can assist them if they are threatened or endangered. Za'tachk cities are crowded, noisy and busy places with nowhere to seek refuge from the hustle and bustle.



Early Za'tachk built nests in trees with spherical or ovoid chambers constructed of branches and leaves. As they were forced to leave the forests, they attempted to build similar structures, moving from branches and leaves to stone, clay and adobe. More robust and lighter building materials were developed as their technology developed, allowing them to build tall, slender structures of multiple spherical and ovoid cells.

An interesting aspect of Za'tachk architecture, which extends to even the design of furniture and vehicles, is the lack of sharp corners. Za'tachk fear being injured, even in a minor way, and sharp corners pose too significant a risk of injury for a Za'tachk to feel comfortable around them.

Modern cities are built in the open, surrounded by flat plains whenever possible. Forests are no longer a place of safety for Za'tachk – the trees stop them from seeing any danger that might be approaching.

As expected, construction and occupation laws govern what each part of a structure can be used for. Personal living apartments are usually found at the top of structures, with the wealthy living at higher levels than the less affluent. Schools, businesses and governmental functions occupy the middle levels of the towers and those closest to the ground are used for industrial operations. Buildings used to gather large groups of individuals are also found on the ground. All structures are constructed using the strictest of regulations to ensure safety and they are all built to withstand the effects of earthquakes, floods and other disasters.

RECREATION

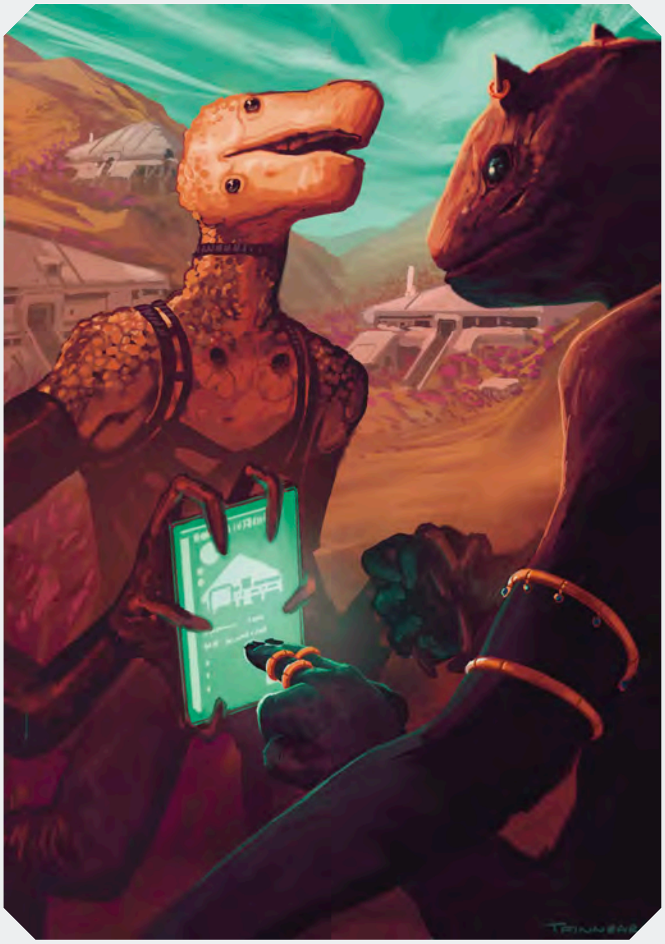
Za'tachk enjoy a broad range of recreational activities but actively avoid others. Sports of any sort are not practised or enjoyed by them – they see the confrontational aspect of sports and the risk of personal injury to be too significant for any sport to be enjoyed by a rational sophont. Avoiding sports extends to simple childhood games involving direct competition and potential aggression. Za'tachk children do not participate in dangerous activities like British bulldog, poison ball or tag.

Instead, Za'tachk enjoy more cerebral forms of recreation. Theatre is a popular entertainment among Za'tachk, which attracts large crowds. The subject matter is factual and always recreates important aspects of Za'tachk history and accomplishments. Like their other art forms, Za'tachk theatre is rather soulless and dry compared to other sophonts' offerings and is more akin to a history lesson than art.

Attending live music performances and concerts is also a widely enjoyed recreational activity. Live music can be found in many varied outlets, from small, intimate surroundings such as cafes to be enjoyed while Za'tachk relax over a meal and conversation, all the way up to large concerts with audiences in the thousands.

Za'tachk also enjoy cooperative board games. The ones which draw the most favour are those that feature organisational tasks of varying difficulty to achieve the game's objective. While these games are rarely appreciated by other sophonts (Bwap being the major exception in this case), they are widely enjoyed by Za'tachk in home, school and work environments.

Cooperative card games are also highly favoured by Za'tachk, as long as they do not have a competitive component. Like board games, card games often feature the use of organisational skills to achieve the outcome of the game, with the players working together to meet a goal set by the rules. These games are often limited by time or the number of rounds, forcing both quick thinking and sharp skills to be successful.



BUSINESS

Businesses are run like governments, with a council of controlling matriarchs at the head and management roles being held by subordinate matriarchs down to middle and low management roles occupied by fertile scouts and homesteaders. The rank-and-file worker roles are the infertile scouts and homesteaders.

Businesses within the Za'tachk Alignment provide all manner of goods and services. Those who seek clientele beyond the Alignment primarily offer administration and organisational services. The services these businesses provide are in high demand throughout the Hive Federation among those who wish to outsource some or all of their administration. Za'tachk propensity and skill in administration are well known and received, and these outsourcing businesses almost always do well.

Not only do corporations outsource their administration to Za'tachk concerns but some governments have also done similarly, utilising the renowned Za'tachk talent for organisation to operate their various administrative services. This is especially true in new colonies, which often engage Za'tachk administrator businesses to organise and manage the bureaucracies required, providing sound structure and data to leaders governing new settlements.

There are no Za'tachk megacorporations but several corporations have expanded their reach and services to several subsectors. The most prominent of these corporations have excellent reputations, known for the efficiency of their employees and the high quality of the services they provide. A few such corporations include:

Slatrastelir: A well-known and highly respected spacecraft classification society which has established and maintained the technical standards for constructing and operating spacecraft and permanent orbital stations and high ports within the Za'tachk Alignment and surrounding subsectors. The standards created and used by Slatrastelir have been adopted throughout the Hive Federation, beyond the Federation's borders to client states and even unaligned governments. Slatrastelir also regularly inspect spacecraft to ensure they meet the necessary construction and operation standards for that type of vehicle.

Phloovastot Ath: An outsourcing company specialising in the administration of new colonies and settlements. The company's main office is located in the Za'tachk Alignment. However, most of its services are provided on the spinward border of the Hive Federation, particularly in the Inapar, Phleqaar and Nodanum subsectors. Their employees manage almost every aspect of government on many of the worlds in those except for the actual act of governing.

Thecudi Lestu Loox: Another outsourcing company, Thecudi Lestu Loox (TLL), provides administrative personnel to other companies on a contractual basis. The company's main office is on Uxoolus (Wrenton sector 2233) – just outside the Za'tachk Alignment borders to avoid taxation. It provides services to companies in the subsectors immediately surrounding the Alignment. While TLL's primary focus is business administration, the company has recently expanded its portfolio to include several private colleges specialising in business studies. The company has such a high reputation that students who have graduated from their business colleges are highly sought after within the Hive Federation.

Beyond organisations outsourcing their administration to Za'tachk-owned businesses, many corporations will preferentially employ Za'tachk for roles within their corporate services.

THE MILITARY

The Za'tachk do not have a large military force, as would be expected for a species known for timidity verging on cowardice. Instead, they prefer armed forces with a small component of Za'tachk officers leading enlisted troops who operate drones specifically designed for warfare. This allows the military to act safely from a distance while using their drones on missions and operations. The drones are manufactured with the best technology available, designed to be efficiently deadly. While the Za'tachk use drones in warfare, they will not utilise autonomous robots. Regardless of how many fail-safes are programmed into such robots, they fear the robots will always pose an unacceptable risk to Za'tachk safety.

As members of the Hive Federation, Za'tachk have access to Ithklur troops. Za'tachk have never taken advantage of them – they are terrified of Ithklur and will have as little to do with them as possible. Za'tachk personnel on multi-sophont crewed vessels within the Hive Federation occasionally have to interact with Ithklur, tending to have a less timid outlook than 'saner' members of their species.

LANGUAGE

Za'tachk ancient languages are no longer in use, having fallen aside in preference to Gurviotic, the standard Federation language. Their original languages are dead, preserved by scholars as a curiosity. Just like their spoken language, Za'tachk use Gurvin-influenced names for themselves. No differentiation is given to Za'tachk sex when names are chosen – which causes no end of amusement for the Gurvin.

Even after adopting Gurviotic, Za'tachk names still follow ancient protocols. Each Za'tachk name consists of three parts; a praenomen similar to a surname and passed down from matriarch to offspring; a midinomen similar to a given name; and finally, a cognomen which identifies the Za'tachk's profession and changes if they switch jobs. The praenomen and the midinomen are always separated by a comma, and the midinomen and the cognomen are always separated by a dash. The name is always used in full. The number of praenomina is limited and identifies the family, ancestors and descendants of a particular bloodline. Praenomen typically consist of a single syllable of two or three letters, such as Afs, Ba, Gi, Ker and Nov. Midinomen are comprised of two syllables of three letters each, such as Dyblos, Vaton and Toroce. The cognomen can consist of any number of syllables and letters but always clearly indicates the profession and position of the Za'tachk. If the Za'tachk is too young to be employed, the cognomen is always Maskis, meaning 'too young to be employed'. Thus, a Za'tachk from the Col nest, with a midinomen of Sanrut and a cognomen of Pahablan would speak and sign their name as Col'Sanrut-Pahablan.

Despite adopting Gurviotic as their primary language, Za'tachk rely heavily on pheromone messaging with other Za'tachk. Pheromones are mainly used to communicate emotions and sensations like fear, happiness, anger, hunger, desire and so forth. Za'tachk can be identified as an individual and community by their pheromones, so much so that a Za'tachk does not have to see another member of their species to identify them as someone they know or as a stranger, which community they hail from and how they are related to each other. A Za'tachk somehow deprived of their sense of smell is significantly disadvantaged when communicating with their species and may be seen as severely disabled.

WRITTEN LANGUAGE

The Za'tachk native written languages, like their spoken languages, have been replaced with Gurviotic script.

THE ZA'TACHK HOMEWORLD

Loza'tch (A664A30-A) is located in the Za'tachk subsector in Wrenton. The world is the second of four, which orbit around a Class K2 V red dwarf locally known as Xer'latkh, one of which is a gas giant. There are also three planetoid belts in the outer system.

Loza'tch resides in orbit one at an average distance of 0.55AU and is tidally locked to Xer'latkh, meaning the planet's rotational period is the same as its orbital period. Being so close to its primary, Loza'tch is within its jump shadow, requiring ships to enter or leave jump at the edge of the shadow instead of 100 diameters from the planet, increasing the travel time in normal space. Loza'tch has an orbital period of 52 days, 22 hours and 12 minutes Imperial.

GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Loza'tch is a dense rocky world with a liquid iron core. A magnetic field is generated by the rotation of the core, which serves the dual purpose of preventing the atmosphere from being stripped away by the solar wind and deflecting radiation emitted by the sun. Loza'tch has a density slightly above standard, with a surface gravity of 0.78G. The crust is still geologically active and divided into nine major tectonic plates. Volcanism is common, with eruptions occurring between 75 and 120 times yearly.

The planet's surface consists of a single supercontinent called Vaxitraq, which covers much of the northern and southern hemispheres. The planet is 42% water, with four small shallow oceans and two small shallow seas.

Vaxitraq possesses six major mountain ranges which define the edges of the tectonic plates. Mountains tend to be tall and show the appropriate amount of erosion considering the atmospheric density. Geological surveys indicate Vaxitraq is in the process of breaking up, resulting in several large continents forming in the next few million years.

The environment is heavily influenced by the tidal locking of the planet. The dayside is extremely hot. A large desert exits where the sun is directly overhead and is not survivable without consideration of protection. Little water can be found on the surface of the planet's dayside. The searing hot temperatures cause the air to rise, causing hurricane-level winds which blow towards the dark side of Loza'tch. The surface temperature cools, approaching the twilight zone to a comfortable level suitable for life. The hot winds from the dayside cool and release their moister, filling rivers, streams and oceans, allowing free-flowing water. The temperature continues to drop approaching the nightside of the planet, causing precipitation to fall as snow and surface water to freeze. The cooler air is then drawn back towards the dayside to repeat the cycle.

THE LOZA'TCH SYSTEM

The Inner System contains only two worlds, Nuxa'tch in orbit zero and Loza'tch in orbit one. Nuxa'tch is a small airless rocky world tidally locked to the sun, the dayside scorching hot and the nightside a frozen wasteland. There is a small solar observatory in the planet's Twilight Zone, crewed by seven scientists.

The outer system contains only three planets. Antacup, the system's sole gas giant, resides in orbit two, with clouds of water vapour giving it a banded blue and white appearance. However, the atmosphere consists primarily of hydrogen and hydrogen-rich molecules. Antacup has four moons and 8,160 moonlets. Only the outermost moon is colonised.

In orbit four is Qitanip, a large rocky planet with a corrosive atmosphere of nitrogen, fluorine and carbon dioxide. The surface is almost completely covered with a thick layer of carbon dioxide ice, several kilometres thick in places, below which are deep saltwater oceans kept liquid by the core's heat.

Kt'actak is the outermost planet in orbit six. It is a rocky planet with a very thin atmosphere comprising an oxygen/nitrogen mix. Small lakes of ice can be found on its surface. On the planet is a small research outpost capable of supporting no more than 10 scientists.

In orbits three, five and seven are planetary belts. While these are listed as separate belts, they are a single belt broken into three rings by the two planets that orbit inside it. The inner belt contains asteroids composed primarily of rock and metals, while the middle and outer ring asteroids are predominantly composed of ice. The planetary belts are heavily populated and mined.

Loza'tch has a diameter of 9,341 kilometres and an axial tilt of 0 degrees, making the season changes only affected by the eccentricity of its orbit. It is tidally locked to the sun, making the nightside of the planet completely covered in snow and ice. The Twilight Zone is generally cool and wet.

A thin atmosphere with a standard oxygen/nitrogen mix comprising 77% nitrogen, 22% oxygen and 1% other gases, surrounds Loza'tch. Visitors to the planet can breathe the atmosphere without assistance.

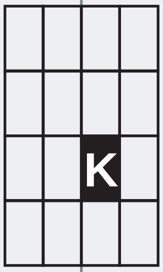
It has no natural satellites.

NATIVE LIFE FORMS

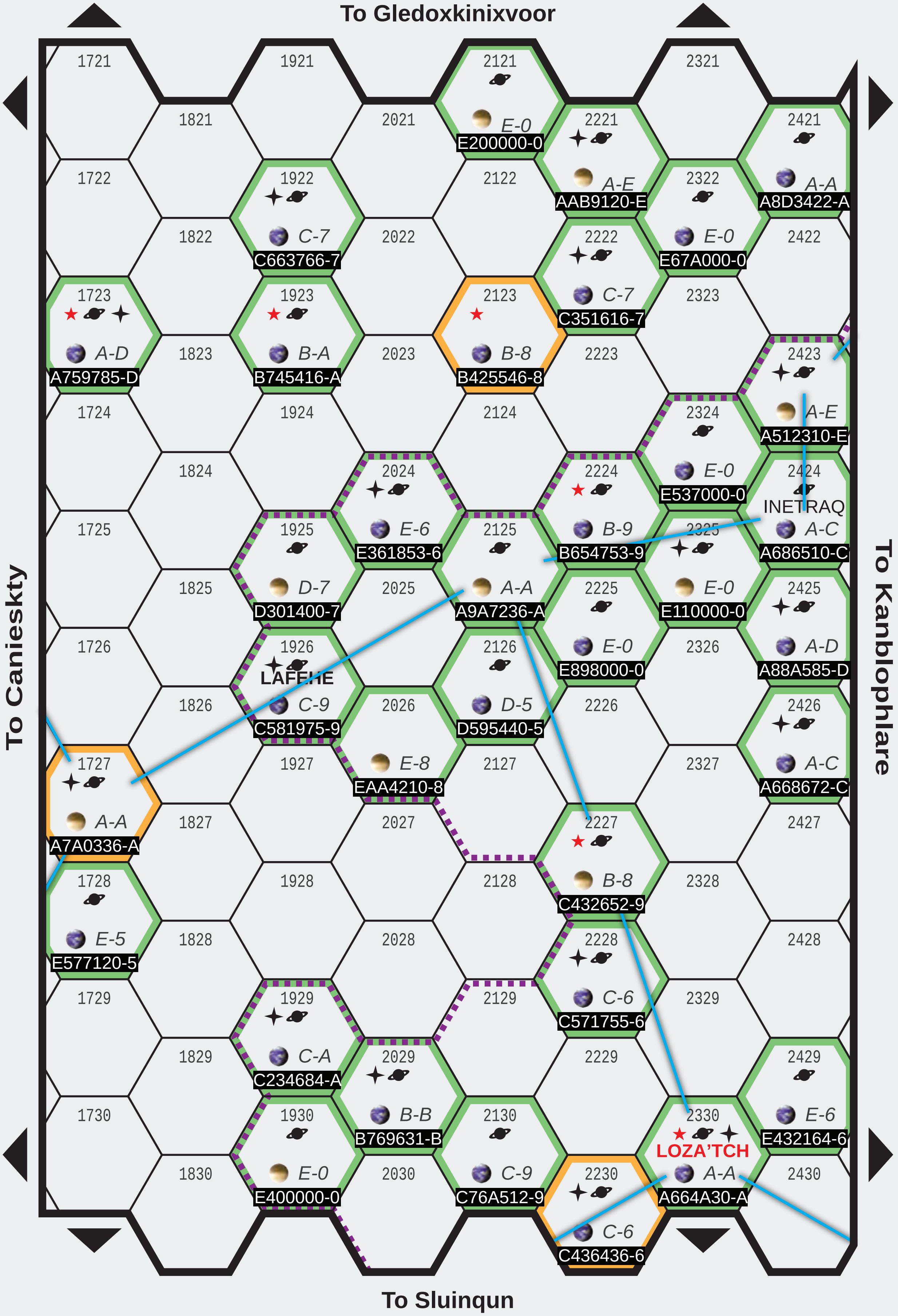
Native life on Loza'tch is carbon-based and compatible with most other life found throughout Charted Space. Biodiversity is diverse, with lifeforms adapted to survive in the extreme environments found on the planet. Diversity is most broad in the twilight zone, reducing in complexity and variety in the more extreme day and night zones.

The majority of all life on Loza'tch has three sexes. These are the Matriarch and Homesteader gender – corresponding to females – and the Scout gender – corresponding to males. Reproduction can occur between only two sexes but producing a Matriarch requires all three genders to mate. Offspring brought about through the mating of all three genders are longer lived and less resistant to disease than those resulting from only two parents.

Plant life is similar to examples found on other worlds, ranging from simple algae to treelike analogues. Due to the strong winds on Loza'tch, plants have adapted to use calcium in their cell walls for strength, which allows them to remain upright in all but the strongest gales. Plants absorb light in the redder part of the visible light spectrum, making leaves and photosynthetic surfaces dark blue-green, getting darker closer to the nightside and lighter closer to the dayside. Plants are either low and broad to avoid damage from the strong winds or tall and narrow to allow the wind to blow past them.



ZA'TACHK SUBSECTOR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★ Other Naval / Tlauku Base
✦ Military Base / Garrison

🟩 Secure System
🟧 Amber Zone
— X-Boat Route
▪▪▪ Za'tachk Aligment

B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
● Planet (Water Present)
● Planet (Dry)
● Gas Giant

Angiosperms – flowering plants – have evolved into a broad range of varieties. Flowers are generally small with thick, brightly coloured petals. Pollination of angiosperms is usually performed by insect analogues, although some plants are specialised to use other animals for this task.

Due to the large number of asteroids in the system, Loza'tch has experienced multiple mass extinctions, causing the rise and decline of many animal species. Since the last extinction event 51 million years ago, vertebrate heterothermic pseudo-mammals have been the dominant land-based lifeforms. Other significant land-based lifeforms include invertebrate insect analogues, vertebrate reptomammal analogues and reptile analogues. Avian life is scarce on Loza'tch due to the strong winds.

Ocean life is diverse. As the oceans have been isolated from each other for significant geological eras, the life within them has evolved separately into many unique species. In them are ectothermic vertebrate and invertebrate piscine, invertebrate crustacean, medusoid and anthropoid analogues.

Vertebrates are generally bilaterally symmetrical quadrupeds with a closed cardiovascular system, although there are some rare examples of radially symmetrical vertebrates. They possess two main body parts – a head and a body. Four limbs for locomotion, although some species have evolved to walk on only two legs and the other limbs have become vestigial. Most of the sensory organs are located on the head, including four eyes, two ears and a mouth.

Several anatomical developments have not occurred in the vertebrates on Loza'tch. Teeth have not developed; instead, bony plates resembling a beak are found in the mouth. The beak has become specialised in most species to account for their diet, such as a broad flat surface at the rear of the beak for masticating fibrous plant material and sharp edges at the front of the beak for slicing and cutting. Nails and claws have not evolved, leading to the ends of digits forming thick fleshy pads for protection. Lastly, fur has not developed as a form of environmental protection. Instead, vertebrates living in colder climes have thicker layers of fat or blubber for insulation.

Invertebrates are generally bilaterally symmetrical with a closed vascular system. Radial symmetry is ubiquitous among aquatic species. They possess external skeletons and a variable number of legs. Body sections can vary between a head/thorax/abdomen, head/abdomen and combined head-body structure. Invertebrate life has many species that use venom for protection and hunting.

As mentioned previously, flight is rare on Loza'tch, with only a few species utilising it, the majority of which are invertebrate insectoids. Flying insectoids generally have six short, broad wings, although some use kite-like structures to be blown by the wind.

STARPORT

Loza'tch has a starport equivalent to a Class A facility found in the Third Imperium. The starport comprises a large orbital highport and a large surface-based downport located far from the capital city. The highport traffic control directs traffic approaching Loza'tch until orbit is achieved and if travel to the surface is desired, the direction is transferred to downport traffic control. The starport is a major hub that services approximately 80 starships daily and can move 250,000 passengers and 11 million tons of cargo through it weekly. It is important to note the starport is not an extrality zone and all Loza'tch and Za'tachk laws apply.

The highport does not provide internal berthing but can externally dock ships up to 200,000-tons. In orbit at a safe distance from the highport are over a dozen construction yards capable of constructing up to 0.2 trillion tons of craft combined.

The highport looks like a huge upside-down cone with the bottom cut off. Attached to the bottom of the cone is a disc-like structure which looks like two shallow bowls or saucers stacked facing each other. This area stores refined and unrefined fuel and the starport power plants. The cone's lower levels contain the port's administration and traffic control function. The middle section includes the main concourse and other entertainment and service facilities for passengers. The upper section contains warehousing and cargo transfer facilities.

Above the cone are two thick rings, one inside the other, attacked to the cone by a central cylinder and four heavy struts, where spaceships dock. The outer ring has 60 docking cradles, some able to support ships up to 200,000-tons. The inner ring also has 60 docking cradles but can only support vessels up to 5,000-tons. Each dock has linkage apparatus for passengers and crew to depart or alight on the ship and refuelling capabilities. Each ring is divided into passenger and freight terminals and several terminals for private vessels. The rings are outfitted with passenger lounges, staff facilities, observation bays, amenities and other services expected by Travellers. Cargo can be loaded and unloaded via access points in the docking cradles for smaller vessels but larger ships are typically loaded via EVA.

Shuttle services operate regularly from the highport to the downport and are reasonably priced. Services arrive and depart hourly.

The downport is a vast facility covering 54 square kilometres. The entire facility is surrounded by a thick explosion-resistant wall shaped to direct any explosions upwards. The downport has several exits and entrances, with only those used for staff purposes guarded. The port has enough landing bays to support 100 craft up to 5,000-tons, half of which can be sealed to protect the craft within. Maintenance facilities are interspersed between the berths for ease of access. The port has several large and many small warehouses where cargo is held until inspected by customs.

The administration and services section of the downport is a large sprawling structure dominated by a long thin tower which houses most of the administration services and traffic control facilities. The structure also contains a concourse, entertainment venues, observation lounges, boarding areas and a freight handling facility. Several large hotels are connected to the downport structure, providing short-term stays and rooms available to suit many different species' requirements.

The downport is surrounded by a large, cleared area and is connected to the capital city via a monorail service that can transport passengers and cargo. In addition, grav-taxis are available to transport Travellers to specific destinations, while several grav-bus services can carry Travellers along established routes.

A large startown with over 200 million inhabitants has grown around the starport. The population comprises mainly of Hiver, Gurvin and other Hive Federation species. Very few Za'tachk feel comfortable living in the startown, even those who work at the starport. Most live elsewhere where spacecraft are less likely to fall from the sky, instead commuting to work daily.

In the startown can be found hotels, light industry, tourist attractions, bars and, of course, less savoury establishments. Like startowns located across Charted Space, crime and underhanded dealings are commonplace and Travellers should take care when visiting.

TECH LEVEL

Loza'tch is a mature TL10 society. Medical technology is slightly more advanced and is at an early TL11, with early experiments on nerve refusion and directed computer implantation being developed and undertaken. Weapons technology is slightly lower at early TL10, with early examples of advanced combat rifles, reflec, combat environment suits, plasma guns, repulsors and crystaliron composites just beginning to enter the commercial market.

GOVERNMENT

The government of Loza'tch comprises three councils, one each for the executive, representative and judicial branches of governance.

The executive council comprises the owners or CEOs of businesses with a gross annual income over MCr500. Like the representative council, membership in the executive council is for life unless the company's annual gross income falls below MCr500 or the owner or CEO of the company retires, resigns or is replaced by the company. Only matriarchs sit on the executive council. The role of the executive council is to discuss, vote on and sign legislation submitted by the representative council into law.

The executive council is chaired by three members, titled rearmost of rearmost. The positions have no special powers in and of themselves except maintaining order during executive council meetings.

Still, the positions provide significant prestige to their holders, which gives them some influence in affecting the council's decisions. It is not unusual for the three holders of the positions to have differing political views and objectives, which can divide the executive council into groups or 'parties' that share the rearmost of rearmost's views.

The representative council is the largest group comprising representatives of businesses with a gross annual income in excess of MCr1. Positions in the council are for life unless the representative retires, resigns or is otherwise replaced by their company. Membership is also forfeited if the representative's company fails to net a gross annual income of MCr1 or more. Both matriarchs and homesteaders are eligible to sit in the representative council. The primary responsibility of the representative council is to raise legislation for discussion and approval before being sent to the executive council for review.

The judiciary council comprises 12 judges assigned to the council by the executive. Positions within the representative and executive councils are for life or until an individual retires, resigns or is otherwise replaced. Both matriarchs and homesteaders are permitted to sit on the judiciary council.

Government agencies operate as a public service, overseeing the government bureaucracy and providing advice and recommendations to the representative council. The government agencies are not assigned to individuals with representative or executive councils for oversight. Instead, government agencies are sponsored by members of either council whose interest lies within their field. An agency presents its advice and recommendations to its patron council members for consideration and action.

LAW LEVEL

The Law Level on Loza'tch is 0, which would appear surprisingly lax for a world where citizens are so wary of their personal safety. A closer look at the planetary laws reveals they are not as relaxed as they may first appear.

Technology is closely monitored and ordinary citizens are not permitted access to technology above TL10. Some government agencies, corporations and authorised individuals have access to technology above the restricted limit but these are the exceptions to the rule.

Visitors are highly restricted in where they are permitted to visit. Most visitors to the planet are not allowed to leave the boundaries of the starport unless they have specific authority. The authority is very difficult to obtain but requests can be at the starport and, if cleared, visitors must carry a copy of the authorisation at all times and present it when requested. Those permitted to leave the starport must declare where they intend to visit and for how long. Law enforcers quickly apprehend any who stray from those areas or overstay.

With these restrictions in place and the Za'tachk's reluctance to carry weapons, there is very little need for a higher Law Level regarding the possession of weapons. Furthermore, the laws regarding harming individuals are particularly harsh and stringently enforced. Being seen carrying a weapon or wearing armour openly is enough to have a Traveller accused of having the intent to cause harm and find themselves incarcerated while they wait to be charged and tried.

MILITARY

As a relatively pacifist society, Loza'tch does not field a large army but the government is aware there is a need for a defensive force to be prepared in case there is a need. Although small, the planet can field a defence comprising ground, airborne and space capabilities. Planetary forces include 18,700 regiments for a total of 93,500 battalions. Of the battalions, only 4,550 are in active service, with the remainder being inactive or reservists. A militia of untrained combatants can be raised in times of emergency or as a defensive last resort comprising 840,000 battalions.

The standard military is equipped with TL10 gear, while elite forces are equipped with TL11 or 12 equipment imported from offworld.

Loza'tch has an annual naval budget of BCr20400. Most of their fleet comprises system defence boats and monitors but includes approximately 15% jump-capable vessels. The flagship of the planetary navy is a TL10 65,000-ton heavy cruiser named the *Lodrenakinuth.*

ECONOMY

Loza'tch is a high population world with a large workforce and an average infrastructure. It is an important trade hub, seeing large amounts of imports and exports and being a central transfer point for passing freight. Interstellar trade provides a significant boost to the local economy as well as supporting the economy of the subsector.

The manufacturing of weapons and armour are primary industries on Loza'tch, which appears somewhat contradictory to the species' pacifistic nature. Although not the most advanced armaments found in either the Za'tachk Alignment or the Hive Federation, they have the reputation of being the most safe and reliable technology available, guaranteed not to backfire, jam or otherwise malfunction. Even Ithklur show a preference for weapons and armour manufactured on Loza'tch.

Loza'tch primarily imports raw materials for manufacturing weapons, basic consumables and luxury items. Primary exports, apart from weapons, are various composite alloys and information.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Loza'tch has a population of 20 billion, 99% of which are Za'tachk. A significant minority of Hivers makes up 0.5% of the population and Gurvin make up 0.3%. The remaining 0.2% of the population is comprised of various other species. Of particular note, there are no Ithklur on Loza'tch and they are not permitted on the planet's surface for any reason. Most alien species can be found living either at the starport or closely nearby.

CULTURE

Loza'tch has a robust and unified culture which is matriarchal, structured and pacifistic. As the homeworld of the Za'tachk species, the inhabitants are proud of their culture and view themselves as the keepers of their species' history and traditions. Unfortunately, this attitude has led many Loza'tch natives to consider other Za'tachk somewhat provincial and uncultured.

The Homesteader sex is heavily discriminated against in Loza'tch society, more so than on most other Za'tachk worlds. Widespread discrimination, including unequal wages and restrictive labour laws hinder gender equality on Loza'tch.

Homesteaders' options for paid productive work are restricted by beliefs which value Matriarchs and Scouts as the main income earners and Homesteaders as the primary homemakers. When Homesteaders work outside the home, they are often considered suitable only for certain professions, usually related to reproductive and childcaring roles. These stereotypes perpetuate the disproportionate burden of care work placed on Homesteaders, limiting their ability to take up or remain in paid work outside the home.

This societal attitude has produced a shortfall in the available labour force on Loza'tch, filled with an increased use of automation and a slightly more tolerant attitude towards limited artificial intelligence. Independent robots are still not tolerated and continue to generate fear in the majority of Loza'tch citizens but they have a wider and broader range of automation than other Za'tachk worlds.

There have been a number of attempts to eliminate discrimination on Loza'tch, largely from offworld concerns, but none have had much success. Homesteaders generally do not believe they are discriminated against, which hinders any attempts to provide them with equality.

URBANISATION

Loza'tch is heavily urbanised but still has large swathes of relative wilderness. Early in their history, Za'tachk only built their settlements in the twilight zone of the planet. Once technology advanced enough for the Za'tachk to comfortably settle in the day and night zones, urbanisation spread.

In the twilight zone can be found large cities featuring typical Za'tachk architecture. Cities comprise thousands of tall, slender towers reaching high into the sky, with spherical and ovoid structures protruding from them. All buildings are designed to withstand earthquakes, even in areas not susceptible to such geological events.

Cities tend to be densely populated, with very few green areas within them. Heavy industrial areas are located on the outskirts of cities, a distance away from habitation areas. Za'tachk cities do not have specific areas zoned for different uses. A typical tower could contain the homes of dozens or hundreds of families in the upper levels, offices, stores and outlets in the middle, and light industry in the lower levels. Cities in the twilight zone are also surrounded by large open areas cleared of trees and other obstacles that could hide any approaching danger. Air traffic is prohibited from flying over cities as a safety precaution and almost all city transport is provided by wheeled vehicles.

Settlements in the day and night zones usually are arcologies built under a series of great domes or into the sides of mountains and cliffs. Individual towers are often built on the surface of the base city structure, designed in the typical Za'tachk style. As many of these cities are in very inhospitable locations, food must either be grown within them or imported from other cities. As with cities in the twilight zone, heavy industry is often located at the edges of the archologies where any pollution they create can be directly vented to the outside environment.

Several archologies have also been built in the small oceans of Loza'tch. These are typically located near the shores, with the arcology partially submerged and the remainder exposed and towering above the waves. These cities normally specialise in a number of aquatic industries such as aquafarming, mining and energy generation.

Large areas of land are set aside for food production. Most agriculture is controlled by large businesses specialising in the growth and transportation of food. Most agriculture is focused on growing plant-based consumables, although a few specialise in animal and insect husbandry.

Cities are connected through multiple forms of transport, including hyperloops, maglev, road and air networks. Travelling from one city to another is an easy undertaking, requiring only a decision on which form of transport is to be taken.

PLACES AND EVENTS

Loza'tch is not generally an inviting destination for species other than Za'tachk, although there are a few tourist attractions open to visit by curious offworlders.

Alirkli Xum: Shortly before the Za'tachk made their first ventures into space, they feared the meeting of alien minds apart from the Hiver would risk their cultural and artistic identity. To help alleviate the fear, they built a large museum where their most important cultural artefacts and works of art could be stored and protected. The structure was built outside the capital city and is truly immense, if not attractive. Within is a combination museum, art gallery, monument and device display, highlighting what the Za'tachk believe to be their greatest achievements. Examples of important paintings, sculptures, ceramics, carvings, structures and technological marvels are displayed in chronological order and clearly described. Tours to the *Alirkli Xum* are conducted via prior appointment and are accompanied by a guide, who explains every exhibit in intricate detail.

Kagar Lorapqooh: Recognised as the site where the first contact between Za'tachk and Hiver occurred, the *Kara Lorapqooh* is a reserve kept in as close condition as it was during the first contact. Several brass plaques commemorate where an important individual stood on the momentous day. The reserve is walled and protected with electronic and live security to preserve it for future generations. Visits are permitted but not without prior arrangement and all visitors must sign agreements confirming they will not disturb, disfigure or otherwise alter the site.

Olenkakac Gurvinfanai: Located in the startown, the *Olenkakac Gurvinfanai* is a trade bazaar owned and operated by Gurvin. The bazaar is a maze of tents and stalls held in 100 square kilometres of open fields, creating a maze of vendors willing to buy and sell almost anything for the right price. There are no laws which protect the buyer on Loza'tch, so the adage 'let the buyer beware' is very much in effect. As well as traders, brokers, vendors and clients, the bazaar is a haven for thieves, thugs, petty criminals and beggars. While it is an exciting place to visit, and one of the few attractions on the planet which should not be missed, Travellers are advised not to attend the bazaar alone and ensure their valuables are well secured.

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

Native life has not been spread very far by Za'tachk Travellers but a few domesticated animals have been intentionally transplanted to other worlds in the Za'tachk Alignment. All the large predators on the planet, anything larger than the size of a Terran rabbit, have been rendered extinct, as they were deemed far too high a risk to Za'tachk. This has led to the problem of many herbivorous species having no natural enemies and suffering from uncontrolled population explosions. Za'tachk deal with this issue through regular culling.

Native Loza'tch species can also be found in zoos and similar facilities throughout the Alignment and Hiver Federation, with some even being found as far as the Solomani Confederation.

As is always the case, native Loza'tch pests and vermin have been unintentionally spread to other worlds.

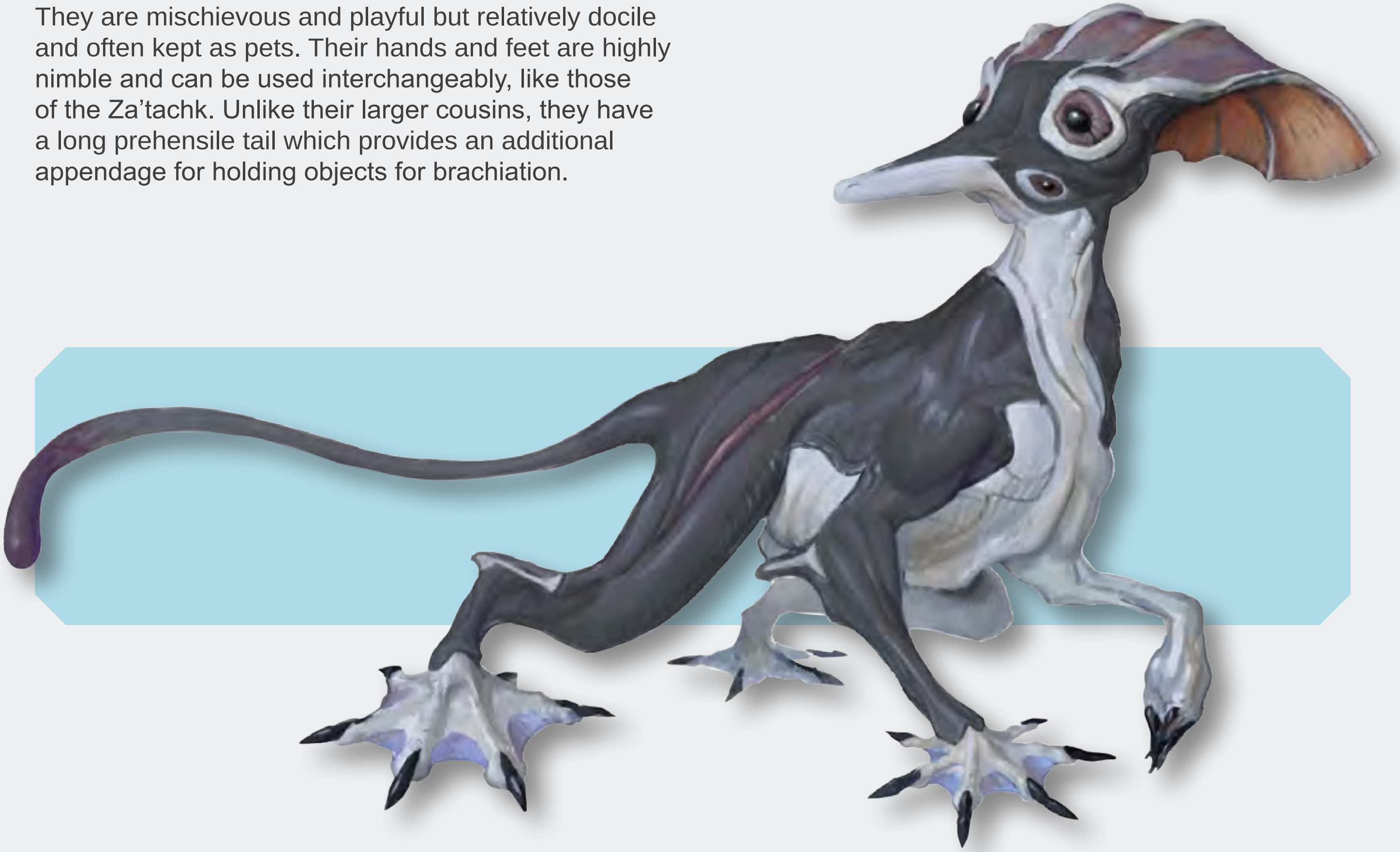
Droosen

Small, communal animals the size of a Terran monkey, the droosen is a relatively distant cousin of Za'tachk. They are mischievous and playful but relatively docile and often kept as pets. Their hands and feet are highly nimble and can be used interchangeably, like those of the Za'tachk. Unlike their larger cousins, they have a long prehensile tail which provides an additional appendage for holding objects for brachiation.

Matriarch droosen possess a large vertical head frill, usually black but during the breeding season it flushes with bright reds, oranges and purples to attract mates. Droosen are very intelligent and are quite capable of learning complex tricks or coping with the actions of other creatures. Za'tachk technicians sometimes use trained droosen to affect simple repairs in places too small for them to fit in.

Droosen are primarily herbivorous, although they do supplement their diet with insects. Their teeth are very small and produce a little bite. Fortunately, even wild droosen are very docile and would rather flee an attack than defend themselves.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Droosen	4	8m
Skills	Athletics (dexterity) 3, Recon 2, Stealth 0, Survival 2	
Attacks	Bite (1)	
Traits	Heightened Senses, Small (-3)	
Behaviour	Omnivore, Gatherer	

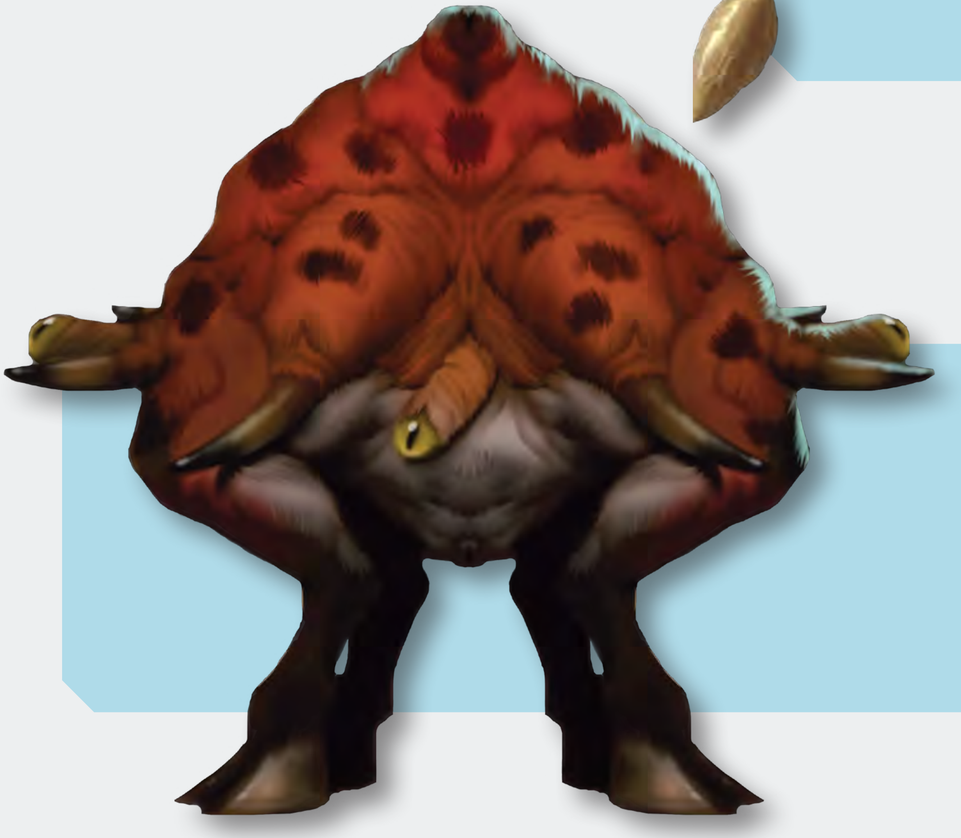


Gimzikgaa

The gimzikgaa is one of the rare examples of a radially symmetrical vertebrate on Loza'tch. An animal the approximate size of a Terran cow, the gimzikgaa have a bulbous body held up by four equally spaced legs. Four eyestalks are located between the legs with the mouth under the body. While relatively docile, gimzikgaa become quite territorial during the breeding season, with the matriarch sex using the ring of horns around the base of the body to compete with other matriarchs for the control of herds.

There are wild and domesticated species of gimzikgaa. The wild genus can be found all across the twilight zone of Loza'tch. The domesticated variety has been bred for docility and has either no horns or small blunt ones. Domesticated gimzikgaa are used primarily for the milk-analogue they produce but some are bred as food animals. Their skin is frequently tanned and put to a variety of uses.

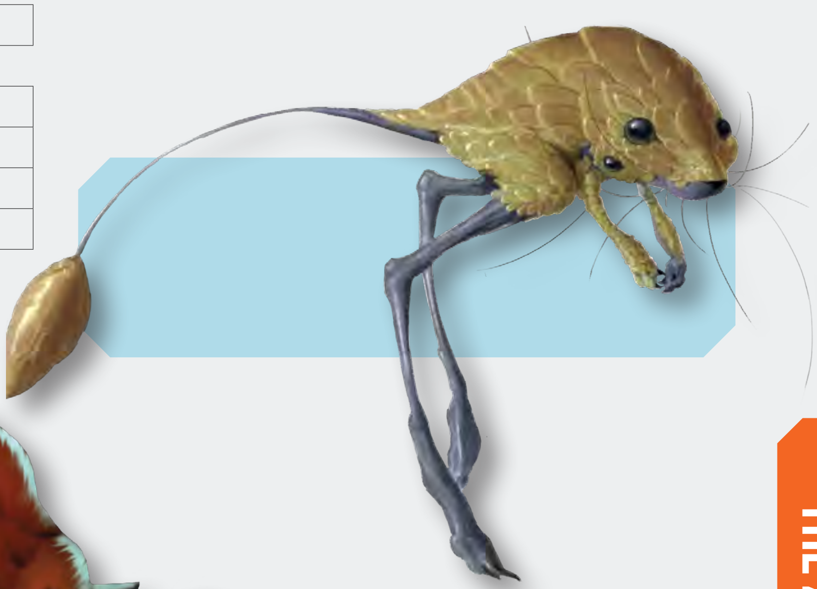
Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Gimzikgaa	30	6m
Skills	Recon 0, Survival 1	
Attacks	Horns (1D+1), Trample (2D)	
Traits	Heightened Senses, Large (+1)	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Grazer	



Kiikuuka

Found in the hot deserts of the day zone, the kiikuuka is a small, rodent-like animal with thick plate-like growths over its body, which protect them from the harsh sun. They hop about on two large back legs, moving swiftly from one area of shade to another, using strong front paws and claws to dig burrows in the sand to sleep or raise young in. Kiikuuka are omnivores, consuming plants and insects but requiring little water, obtaining what they need from food.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Kiikuuka	2	6m
Skills	Athletics (dexterity) 2, Survival 2	
Attacks	—	
Traits	Armour (+1), Small (-4), Fast Metabolism (+2)	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Gatherer	



Muulag

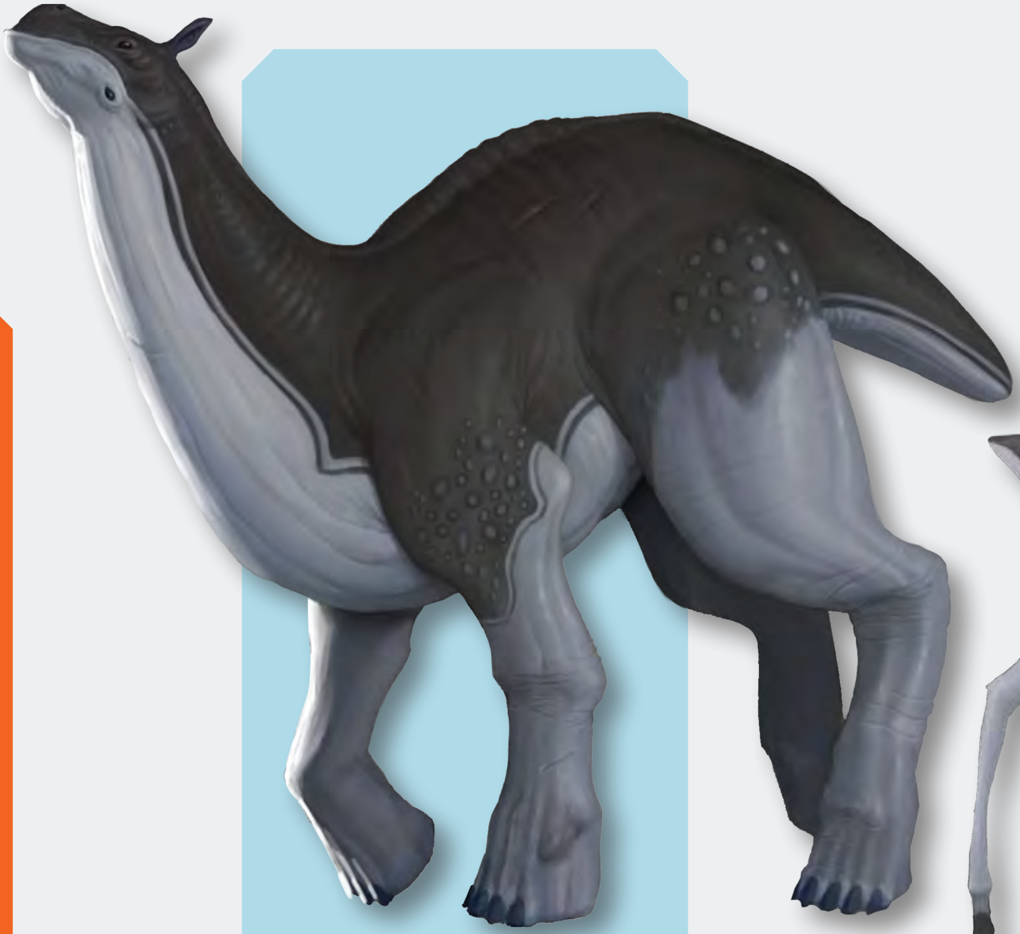
The muulag is a large herbivore found both in the twilight and night zones of Loza'tch. They have evolved to live in cold climates. They have a thick layer of blubber under their skin, which keeps them warm in the harsh frozen nightside of Loza'tch. The blubber is highly nutritious, making the muulag a common prey animal. They travel in large herds, sometimes up to several hundred in number, to help protect them from predators. Despite their size, they are a docile species and the only danger they present is inadvertent trampling when spooked.

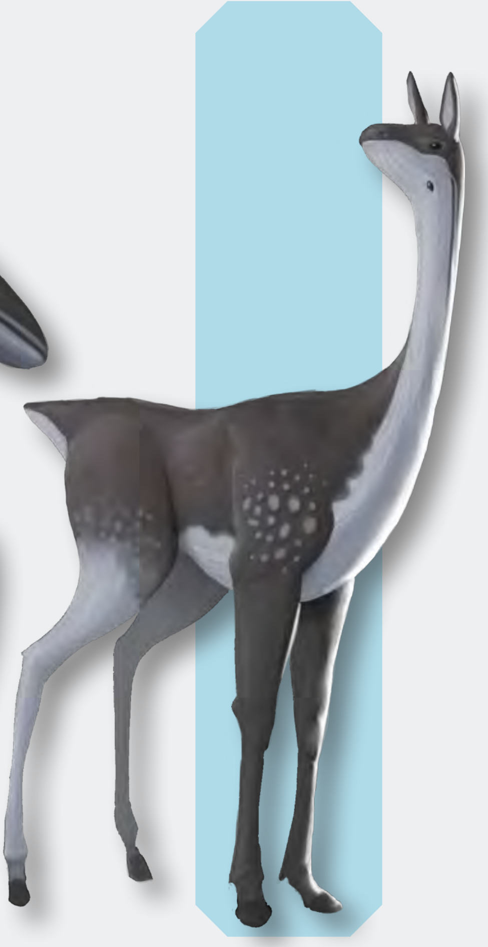
Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Muulag	82	8m
Skills	Athletics (endurance) 1, Recon 1, Survival 1	
Attacks	Trample (5D)	
Traits	Armour (+4), Heightened Senses, Large (+4), Slow Metabolism (-2)	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Grazer	

Shemgikim

A relative of the muulag, the shemgikim is a long-legged herbivore long domesticated by the Za'tachk, with few close species still in the wild. Shemgikim were originally adapted to migrate from the twilight zone to the day zone to give birth and then travel back to the twilight zone again. Used in the past as both a riding animal and beast of burden, they are mainly kept as pets on more technologically advanced worlds but can still be found being put to good use on the less advanced worlds of the Za'tachk Alignment. While known as being exceedingly docile, a surprised shemgikim can give a kick powerful enough to shatter bones. Domesticated shemgikim have their legs tethered by a hobble to prevent accidents from occurring.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Shemgikim	38	9m
Skills	Recon 0, Survival 1	
Attacks	Kick (3D)	
Traits	Heightened Senses, Large (+3)	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Grazer	





ZA'TACHK HISTORY

The Za'tachk have a long history full of victories and failures. Much of their early history has been lost or considered suspect due to the late development of writing. Much of the history of that period is as much myth and legend as fact. The Za'tachk do not seem to mind, holding onto these early myths as if they were the true history of their world. Their history became far more rooted once writing had been developed and more so once contact with the Hive Federation was made.

PREHISTORY

Za'tachk evolved on Loza'tch (Wenton sector 2330) in a system with a K2 V red dwarf primary star at 0.55AU. Due to its close orbit, Loza'tch is tidally locked to its star.

Evolution began in the oceans of the twilight zone and spread from there across the planet. The dim light provided by the system's primary led to plant life being black and dark purple in colour to capture as much of the visible light spectrum as possible. Animal life evolved into seeing primarily in the infrared portion of the spectrum.

Proto-Za'tachk developed in the temperate forests of the twilight zone, living in nests built high in the tree canopy and populated by family groups. Proto-Za'tachk developed rudimentary agriculture and animal husbandry, like that found in some species of Terran ants. Global cooling and drying caused dieback of the forests, forcing the proto-Za'tachk to move from an arboreal lifestyle to one on the plains. The challenges associated with the change in environment and adapting their agriculture to a plains environment saw an increase in intelligence leading to sentience and sophoncy.

Several species of proto-Za'tachk evolved during this period and adapted to different environments. Due to their naturally peaceful and cooperative natures, when different species of proto-Za'tachk met, they often banded together and reproduced, eventually leading to the modern species of Za'tachk.

THE FIRST CITIES

As a result of their cooperative nature, Modern Za'tachk developed large settlements before they entered the Stone Age. This led to the development of complex social structures far earlier than experienced by many other sophonts. As more significant numbers of Za'tachk came to live in closer proximity and agriculture led to an excess of food, some were freed from the requirements of subsistence living to pursue other activities. Stone tool use was developed during this period – first to prepare the ground for planting crops and then to create simple tools to ease labour. Eventually, stone and flint were used to produce sharper weapons to aid in defence of communities.

The Za'tachk would remain in the Stone Age for 46,000 years. Their lack of curiosity and innovation slowed their development towards using metal tools. Despite this, their social development continued unabated. Political action moved from the hereditary rule of matriarchs to monarchies supported by sophisticated bureaucratic organisations. Writing did not develop until later but mathematics was quickly invented to deal with the intricacies of population control and the need to feed growing populations. Excess food could not only be used to free individuals from needing to grow crops but could also be traded with other settlements.

Trade rapidly developed, creating ties between city states and allowing the sharing of new ideas. Writing developed from mathematics used primarily in governance for accurate record keeping. During this time, the first Za'tachk nation rose under the rulership of Mut'Gont-Netodre, who united several far-flung city-states into a single matriarchy known as Mut'achactk and governed by a vast bureaucratic machine. The Mut dynasty lasted over 1,000 years, slowly expanding and absorbing newly discovered city-states and replacing ruling matriarchs with the Mut lineage. New communities were settled, further increasing the size of the matriarchy. Metalworking had yet to be developed but volcanic glass and obsidian had been used, leading to sharper tools and implements used in agriculture.

It was inevitable that Mut'achactk would eventually encounter a matriarchy as large as it was. In fact, it met several – the Xoczaaltho Matriarchy, the Bol'varcolchk Matriarchy and the Sazkchlarctck Matriarchy. Through diplomacy and cooperation, political ties were created and ideas were shared. Disputes were inevitable but diplomacy was used to overcome most of them with mutually beneficial solutions. Any armed conflicts were few and short, swiftly resolved through negotiations.

THE GREAT PLAGUE

In -34,100, a previously unknown virulent disease struck Mut'achactk. The disease, known as the Shaking Death, began with sneezing and coughing, swiftly leading to joint pain and muscular spasms. Unconsciousness soon followed but the muscular spasms continued until the individual recovered or died.

Mut'achactk's overpopulated cities, poor sewerage management and lack of medical knowledge allowed the disease to spread quickly and kill thousands. The Mut Dynasty, already immunocompromised by successive generations of inbreeding, was devastated by the plague, ending its 1,000-year reign. The Shaking Death quickly spread from Mut'achactk to the civilisations it traded with, reducing their populations to a fraction of their former number. The three great civilisations of Mut'achactk, Xoczaaltho, and Bol'varcolchk collapsed completely into smaller struggling nests. Only Sazkchlarctck managed to survive but with a significantly reduced population.

Slowly, over the next 2,000 years, Sazkchlarctck struggled to return to its former glory, the Shaking Death continued to infect and kill Za'tachk but its virulence abated. Eventually, only those with natural immunity to the Shaking Death survived. Unfortunately, the civilisation of Sazkchlarctck collapsed in -104100. Those left behind fell back to forming smaller nests, fearing the danger of living in large, overcrowded cities.

RECOVERY AND REGROWTH

Over 10,000 years, Za'tachk maintained only small communities with no more than three family groups. The ruins of their previous great civilisations remained empty reminders of what overcrowding brought. Trade and communication between nests eventually recommenced and new civilisations and cultures emerged, but no great cities were built. Central governments returned, along with naturally forming bureaucracies. Governing widely dispersed communities proved difficult but the resourceful Za'tachk overcame such problems. An efficient communication system consisting of scouts employed as runners to carry messages from one nest to another developed, connecting far-flung nests.

Slowly, civilisation recovered and spread across the surface of Loza'tch. Governments remained dominated by large hereditary bureaucracies. Incompetence grew as unsuitable individuals inherited important positions. Corruption set in and then became rampant. The organised structure of Za'tachk governance became chaotic and unpredictable. This was an intolerable situation for the naturally organised Za'tachk, yet their lack of initiative prevented them from finding a solution to the problem.

A NEW CIVIL SERVICE

In -14000, a young matriarch named Qek'bachktak of the Qek Dynasty found a solution to the nepotism and corruption befouling the civil service. She abolished the traditional hereditary manner of recruitment in the bureaucracies and introduced the first series of exams which those who wished to enter civil service must sit – no longer would a position in one of the vast civil machines be guaranteed by birth but must be earned through merit. The civil examinations grew in favour slowly over the centuries as other matriarchies saw the smooth manner in which the Qek government operated and adopted the method.

The Za'tachk had yet to enter the Bronze Age. Bronze working had seen some experimentation but the soft metal was inferior to the glass and obsidian, which were still used in tools, and experimentation ceased. Ocean travel was restricted to staying close to the shoreline and sailing had yet to be developed. Labour was still largely manual, using Za'tachk, or rarely, animal power. Mathematics was highly developed but only in calculating food requirements or population pressures. Political science was advanced in the areas the Za'tachk practised but not beyond.

The Za'tachk had developed highly complex civilisations whilst remaining firmly ensconced in the Stone Age.

FIRST CONTACT

In -4100, the Hivers arrived in the Za'tachk system and discovered the habitable planet in the second orbit. Hivers had been exploring space for almost 600 years and, in that time, they had discovered complex life but no sophont life and were beginning to believe they were alone. It came as something of a surprise to them when their initial scans of Loza'tch revealed evidence of intelligent life.

Further examinations of the natives revealed had no cities or other centres of civilisation. The Hivers soon discovered that the Za'tachk had only achieved a Stone Age level of technology yet had created complex social structures.

The Hivers studied the Za'tachk from a distance for almost 10 years, attempting to learn and understand their cultures and traditions before making themselves known. The first physical contact occurred in -4050.

Initial attempts proved problematic, as Za'tachk feared these strange new creatures who looked so much like them yet were so very different. Za'tachk were more inclined to flee from Hivers than attempt communication. In some cases, Hiver contact parties were attacked, albeit ineffectually, from a distance.

At first, the Hivers couldn't quite understand how the Za'tachk communicated, mistaking their spoken language as meaningless vocalisations. Persistence and a little manipulation overcame natural Za'tachk timidity but contact progressed slowly, complicated by a lack of a common language. Communication was eventually established through a simplified form of Hiver sign language.

The Hivers were overjoyed to learn that the Za'tachk were a peaceful species, given to diplomacy rather than conflict, and they valued cooperation and organisation highly. Yet despite the sophistication of their politics and civilisation, the Za'tachk were a child species and this resonated with Hiver parental instincts. More importantly, the Za'tachk had natural skills in areas the Hivers could see would benefit a larger interstellar community.

Work began to raise the Za'tachk to what Hivers considered adulthood. Communication was difficult until the Hivers adopted the Gurvin language and taught it to the Za'tachk. With the communication hurdle overcome, relations between the Za'tachk and the Hivers grew and strengthened.

The Hivers introduced technology slowly to the Za'tachk but far more swiftly than if they were to discover it themselves. The Za'tachk fear of living near others was alleviated with improved sanitation and medical knowledge. Rarely did the Za'tachk request new technologies, yet despite their lack of curiosity, they quickly realised the benefits the new technologies introduced by the Hivers brought. In less than 100 years, the Za'tachk rose from a Stone Age civilisation to one entering an industrial revolution.

The Za'tachk were carefully shepherded through the industrial age and into the pre-stellar era over the next 200 years. Most of the errors made by species not fortunate enough to be guided by benevolent benefactors were avoided – the Za'tachk never had to deal with dead-end experimentation, excessive pollution, climate change or mass extinctions. The Hivers gave the Za'tachk the technology they needed when they needed it.

TO THE STARS

By -3700, the Hivers provided the technology the Za'tachk required to make their first forays into space. In just under 100 years, the Za'tachk had spread out to colonise their solar system.

By -3600, the Za'tachk were provided with the technology to build their first jump drive. At first, the Za'tachk were reluctant to undergo interstellar travel, fearing the minor but still possible risk of misjumping. Yet, they understood the need to spread their species to other worlds to guarantee survival in the event of their homeworld suffering an extinction level catastrophe. A few insane Za'tachk took up the challenge and began the exploration of the local star cluster. As the relative safety of jump travel became known, more Za'tachk were willing to take the risk of interstellar journeys.

The Hivers had already set aside space for the Za'tachk to expand into and they steadily explored and then settled their local star cluster of seven systems. The Za'tachk showed no further interest in developing beyond the Hiver-imposed limits to exploration, content with what they had achieved.

While some Za'tachk moved to colonise the stars, others joined forces with their Hiver benefactors, bringing their expertise in organisational structure and civil management. By this stage, Za'tachk could be found serving on Hiver spacecraft, working in their organisations and assisting in governing the neophyte Federation.

This remained the status quo for approximately 500 years. During this period, the foundations of the Za'tachk Alignment were developed and cemented into law. The few planets which the Za'tachk had colonised continued to grow and prosper. The Alignment government reached out to the Hive Federation with a request to open more planets for their colonisation. The Federation was more than happy to comply with the request. The subsectors set aside by the Hivers for Za'tachk exploration and settlement were presented to them, along with the specifications of the jump-2 drive.

The Za'tachk once again reached for the stars, exploring the worlds newly within their reach. Slowly they colonised them. Like proud parents watching their offspring leave home to begin their lives, the Hivers looked on, providing advice and assistance to ensure the Za'tachk developed and grew in the desired direction.

WAR

In -2038, the Hive Federation entered a war with the expansionistic and xenophobic K'Kree. The Za'tachk were horrified by the K'Kree and their genocidal tendencies. They petitioned the Hive Federation to eradicate the enemy species before it could destroy the interstellar polity. The Federation was reluctant to go to such extremes but assured the Za'tachk Alignment they had plans to deal with the K'Kree. The Hiver reluctance did not sit well with the Alignment and as the war wore on, they threatened to secede from the Federation several times.

This period was a time of great upheaval in the Za'tachk Alignment. Not satisfied with how their government was handling the war, some Za'tachk worlds built enormous generational space arks for a select portion of populations to flee beyond the trailing and rimward borders of the Hive Federation. These massive vessels were designed to accelerate to a fraction of the speed of light and then coast until they had travelled a sufficient distance from the borders of the Hive Federation. Those who fled were willing to risk the sublight journey, which would take thousands of years to complete, rather than face the risk of being eradicated at the hands of the K'Kree. Communications were maintained with the arks for several decades after their launch.

In a bid to protect the Za'tachk homeworld, the Alignment government began a project to calculate the feasibility of moving the entire Loza'tch star system out of Federation space. Studies were initiated on methods of moving their primary star, various gravitic engines were postulated, the amount of energy required to move the star at relativistic speeds, the survivability prospects of Loza'tch when travelling at such speeds and so on.

By -2017, the war with the K'Kree was over but the Za'tachk Alignment was not convinced the Federation was safe from their coreward neighbours. They continued their research into moving the Za'tachk home system with the intention of eventually having the technology to flee into a safer area of space. The study continued for almost 200 years when it was suddenly dropped with no real explanation given by the Alignment Government except to confirm to the Za'tachk people its belief in the Federation government and the role it took in defending them.

In -1889, the last message was received from the sublight ark fleeing towards the rimward border of the Hive Federation. In the intervening years, contact was lost with the other fleeing arks. No public attempt was ever made to discover the fates of the lost arks. The consensus among the Za'tachk was the ark project was a fool's errand ill-conceived by insane individuals.

THE MODERN DAY

In 1090, the Za'tachk learned of the approaching Empress Wave. The news was kept secret by the Alignment government for the fear it would bring an unmitigated manic terror to all those who learnt of its approach. The Alignment began making preparations to avoid the effects of the wave. The research into moving large stellar bodies was reinitiated, drawing on the research from the previous attempt but investigations indicated the project would not be successful. Moving an entire solar system would take millions of years and the Empress Wave would overtake them in that time. Yet, despite this evidence, more conservative voices within the Alignment prevailed and funds were funnelled into the stellar engine project. The Za'tachk did not have the technology to achieve their goals but intended to gain it before the wave arrived.

Other projects were initiated, their true purpose hidden from the public. Some researched the possibility of protecting Za'tachk worlds from the worst effects of the Empress Wave with an energy screen, while others sought to relocate the population. One project involved building new arks similar to those lost 3,000 years in the past. These new arks, 34 kilometres in length and 18 kilometres wide were publicised as colonial transports to carry entire populations to new worlds. The arcs were projected to take over half a century to build. Construction began immediately on three arks. Another five arks would begin construction over the next decade.

The ark project was fraught with complications. Funding was often unreliable, causing construction delays. At other times, factions with the Alignment government sought to sabotage the attempts, preferring to see more effort placed on the stellar engine project. This delayed the completion of the arks, which drew further criticism from more conservative voices.

By 1100, construction secretly began on the first stellar engine for the Za'tachk home system. The structure is expected to take over a century to complete but if successful will enable the stellar engine to draw power from the sun itself to propel it away from the Empress Wave and rimward out into the galactic void. The budget for such a device was astronomical but the Za'tachk were quite prepared to bankrupt the entire Alignment to succeed.

Finally, in early 1105, the first ark was completed. Capable of comfortably supporting over a million inhabitants, the Alignment has started offering places on the new ark to suitable individuals. The fear of this ark becoming lost or destroyed bears heavily on those selected and not everyone accepts the invitation. Several prominent Alignment political individuals – previous heads of Planetary Bureaus and other essential organisations have signed onto the project – which has laid to rest some of the concerns raised by others. The first ark is expected to launch in late 1106.

Today, the Za'tachk Alignment is a valuable member of the Hive Federation. Za'tachk can be found throughout the Federation as administrators and government officials, crew aboard starships and in enclaves throughout Hiver space. They are highly valued for their strong organisational skills, attention to detail and highly cooperative nature.

ZA'TACHK TIMELINE

The following gathers together some important dates and events in Za'tachk history.

Date	Event
-100000	Earliest evidence of Za'tachk tool use.
-85000	Earliest evidence of multi-nest settlements.
-50000	Za'tachk enter Stone Age.
-35000	Foundation of the Mut'achactk, Xoczaaltho and Bol'varcolchk civilisations.
-34100	The Shaking Death plague ravaged Za'tachk civilisations.
-34000	The Mut Dynasty ends.
-33900	Mut'achactk, Xoczaaltho and Bol'varcolchk civilisations collapse.
-31900	Sazkchlarctck civilisation collapses.
-21000	Civilisation slowly recovers and cities begin spreading across the continent of Loza'tch.
-14000	Qek'bachktak introduces the civil service examination system to counteract governmental corruption and nepotism.
-10000	Evidence of experimental bronze usage but is not continued.
-4100	The Hivers discover the Za'tachk.
-4050	Hivers make first contact with the Za'tachk.
-3950	Za'tachk begin industrial revolution.
-3750	Za'tachk enter the Pre-Stellar Era.
-3700	Za'tachk begin exploring their solar system.
-3600	Za'tachk obtain jump drive and begin exploring their local stellar cluster.
-3100	Za'tachk have colonised their local star cluster and founded the Za'tachk Alignment.
-2038	Hiver Federation enters war with the K'Kree. Za'tachk lobby to have the K'Kree exterminated.
-2029	First Za'tachk sublight arc leaves for an unknown destination beyond the trailing Hiver Federation Border. The first ark will be followed by six more.
-2019	Last Za'tachk sublight arc leaves, headed for an unknown destination beyond the rimward Hiver border.
-2017	Hiver/K'Kree war ends.
-1967	Za'tachk abandon research on relocating their solar system.
-1889	Contact is lost with the last known surviving sublight ark.
0	Za'tachk can be found throughout the Hive Federation.
1090	Za'tachk learn of the approaching Empress Wave.
1100	Construction secretly begins on building a stellar engine to move the Za'tachk home system.
1105	The current date.

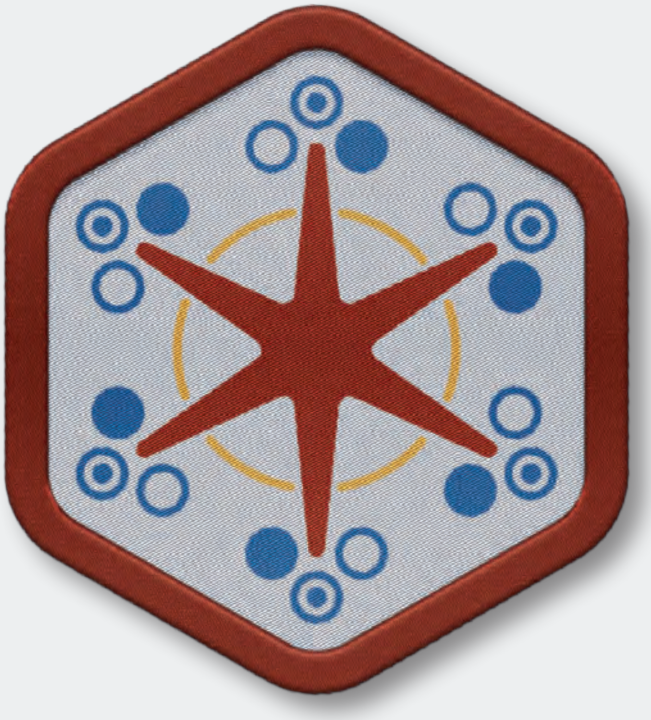
THE ZA'TACHK ALIGNMENT

The Za'tachk Alignment is a bureaucratic polity within the borders of the Hive Federation in Wrenton. The Alignment occupies most of the Za'tachk and Kanblophalre subsectors and stretches a short way into Sluinqun and Riekluar. The majority of the population within the Alignment is Za'tachk, although people of all the major Hive Federations live and work there as well.

Each world within the Alignment is allowed limited self-rule, while the vast Alignment bureaucracy governs the overall polity. Each world must adhere to the laws issued by the Alignment bureaucracy or risk a series of punishments starting with fines and ending in censorship. In many ways, where the Alignment begins and individual world governments end can confuse outsiders but the Za'tachk have no problems finding the dividing lines.

THE ALIGNMENT GOVERNMENT

A broad and almost all-encompassing impersonal bureaucracy governs the Alignment. Within the bureaucracy are almost countless agencies which oversee practically every aspect of the population's lives. The bureaucracies are divided between greater and lesser bureaus.



Each world in the Za'tachk Alignment, 42 in total, and the Alignment itself, has a greater bureau dedicated to it. The bureau represents the world it is responsible for within the interstellar polity. The head of each bureau sits on the Alignment Grand Commission, the highest level of government within the Alignment. The grand commission is headed by the three matriarchs chosen from among the members of the high commission, who are known as the rearmost of rearmost secretaries. The grand commission is where items of legislation raised by the individual bureaus are debated and decided upon. The rearmost of rearmost, despite being the recognised heads of the Za'tachk Alignment, have no special veto power. However, their opinions hold significant weight with the other commission members.

The heads of the planetary bureaus are not the only members of the grand commission – the leaders of every other grand bureau also have a seat on the grand commission. This includes, but is not limited to, the bureaus of defence, external intelligence, internal intelligence, finance, population, reproduction, foreign relations, internal relations, law enforcement, border security, justice and civic service.

The grand commission, and most other grand bureaus, have their headquarters on the Za'tachk homeworld. The buildings and facilities of the grand commission have diplomatic status and are not subject to the laws and regulations of Loza'tch. The grand commission meets at the Alignment Tower, an enormous skyscraper over two kilometres high located in the centre of the Alignment Central Plaza. The plaza hosts other grand bureau buildings and has a dedicated starport.

Staff from the bureaus are drawn from the populace of the member worlds of the Alignment. Once a year, exams organised and administered by the Grand Bureau of Civic Service are held on each planet. Individuals interested in serving the Alignment government sit the exams to win a position in one of the bureaus. The exams are entirely impersonal and favour is not given based on family, social standing or level of education. With that said, most worlds have education facilities geared to provide students with the best chance of getting a passing mark. The exams are highly competitive and success in the entrance exams is an outstanding achievement.

Progressing within the bureaus is also conducted via exams. There are no interviews or natural promotions. Each step in an employee's career is governed by how well they fared in the last exam they chose to sit. This merit system ensures, perhaps a little idealistically, that only those capable of a position are granted one.

Each member world must contribute to the Grand Bureau of Finance to fund the Alignment. The Grand Bureau of Finance decides the contribution amount based on the population of the member planet and considers the wealth, resources and workforce of the world in question. The member planet, through its representative grand bureau, may attempt to negotiate with the Grand Bureau of Finance to reduce the amount of the world's contribution. These negations can be highly time-consuming, often taking months to conclude.

THE MILITARY

The Za'tachk Alignment has a military organisation, the Grand Bureau of Defence, to which the role of defending the polity falls. The military is relatively small as the Hive Federation provides the majority of defence for its member nations. The Alignment military, therefore, is primarily a coast guard with the purview of protecting the borders of the Alignment should the case ever arise that the Hive Federation's forces are unable to. With the permission of the grand bureau, the Alignment military is also required to lend aid to the Hive Federation military when needed.

The role and actions the Alignment military are permitted to take are limited to purely military actions. There is no overlap with the functions of the Grand Bureaus of Border Control, which is responsible for preventing the smuggling of prohibited items into the Alignment, the Grand Bureau of Intelligence, which is responsible for security within the borders of the Alignment and the Grand Bureau of Law Enforcement which prevents piracy and apprehends interstellar criminals within the Alignment. Each bureau is highly protective of its areas of jurisdiction. While they may work together occasionally, they are cautious not to infringe on the responsibilities of the other.

The military is divided into two branches: the Interstellar Space Force and the Interstellar Ground Force. The space forces are equivalent to the navies of other polities. Bases are located in systems on the border of the Alignment where the vessels of the space fleet are stationed. Routine manoeuvres often take task forces away from their bases to perform regular patrols and occasionally wargames.

The Interstellar Ground Forces are equivalent to the armies of other polities. Similar to the space forces, they are stationed on bases located on worlds near the Alignment border. The ground forces also perform routine manoeuvres and occasionally perform joint manoeuvres with the space forces.

The Za'tachk Alignment has no marine force. Instead, the role of marines is undertaken by select units drawn from the Interstellar Space Force.

NAVY ORGANISATION

The Interstellar Space Force is purely an organisation for the defence of the Za'tachk Alignment. Its forces are paid for with a budget supplied annually by the Grand Bureau of Finance, from which the space force is to build and maintain its fleet of vessels and provide monetary remuneration to its personnel.

Personnel are drawn from the member planets of the Alignment and selected through the ordinary course of examinations held by the Grand Bureau of Civic Service. All Za'tachk who complete the battery of exams enter the Space Force as the equivalent of a non-commissioned officer. From there, recruits are trained in basic skills, which takes 10 weeks. Those who successfully pass are assigned to units where training in specialities continues. Promotion is gained through completing promotion exams. All commissioned officers are drawn from a pool of eligible non-commissioned personnel who successfully pass the officer exam. There is no limit to how many times military personnel may sit promotion exams but they may only sit one exam per term.

The space force is commanded by three rearmost admirals, who are charged with their duty by the Grand Bureau of Defence. While the rearmost admirals do not have a seat on the grand commission, they routinely advise the security on interstellar military matters. The rearmost admirals are stationed at the space force base on Loza'tch and report directly to the securities of the Grand Bureau of Defence.

The space force has a relatively small number of vessels, although the vessels it does have tend to be large and heavily armoured. No crewed vessel is smaller than 1,000-tons. Smaller vessels are drones operated by pilots secure in a mothercraft. The fleet is divided into four fleets, one for each subsector the Alignment crosses. The Alignment lies primarily in the Za'tachk and Kanblophalre subsectors, so those two fleets are the largest. Each fleet is based at one or more bases in their home subsector, except for the Riekluar Fleet, part of the Kanblophalre fleet and found in that subsector.

Fleets are named after the subsector they are assigned to. Fleets of the coreward subsectors are further broken down into squadrons named after the planet they are stationed at. For example, the Loza'tch Taskforce is stationed at Loza'tch and is part of the Za'tachk subsector fleet. Squadrons are further broken down into divisions and, finally, taskforces which are formed for specific operations. All formations have a number of vessels divisible by three.

NAVY OPERATIONS

Space force vessels tend to be large and heavily armoured. This philosophy makes sense when viewed through a Za'tachk lens – a larger, better armed ship will provide far more protection than a smaller, less well armoured vessel. Vessels are armed uniformly with long-range weapons. Missiles are favoured, with energy weapons used primarily for defence and point defence batteries. An exception to this design philosophy is the inclusion of spinal energy mounts on vessels large enough to support them, although Za'tachk ships are never armed with mass drivers.

Military ships smaller than 1,000-tons are all drones, remotely piloted from another vessel. The fleet uses drone fighters to protect crewed ships with a mobile defensive screen. Unlike crewed vessels, drone vessels are typically lightly to moderately armoured and often heavily armed with only energy weapons, as there are no risks of pilots being injured or killed. This has drawbacks, primarily signal jamming, although this becomes less of a problem with laser and meson communication.

While the space force utilises combat drones, it does not use vessels that cannot operate independently. There are no robot fighters or missiles – smart missiles are as far as the Za'tachk will go and even those cause some anxiety.

Naval operations include frequent patrols along the Alignment border. Given the nature of interstellar travel, these patrols naturally take the form of patrol forces jumping into a solar system near the border. They spend time within the system to refuel and establish their presence before jumping to the next system. The trailing border in the Kanblophalre and Riekluar subsectors is closest to the Hive Federation border and unaligned space, so it is the most actively patrolled.

The space force includes the Special Tactical Operations Group (STOG), which performs some of the duties usually assigned to marines in other polities, including boarding actions and ship security. The members of STOG are elite drone jockeys who perform their tasks through remotely controlled drones. STOG drones are routinely Za'tachk-sized to enable easy access to heavily armed and armoured vessels. STOG units hold a particular prestige among young Za'tachk scouts and it is a great badge of honour to be a member of these units.

ARMY ORGANISATION

Like the space force, the Interstellar Ground Force is financed through funds allocated to it from the Grand Bureau of Finance collected from Alignment member worlds. The funds are used to purchase and maintain ground forces bases, vehicles, equipment and pay personnel.

Personnel are drawn from individuals who pass the entrance exams set out and administered by the Grand Bureau of Civic Service. Like the space force, those who pass the exams are recruited as non-commissioned personnel and given initial training, which lasts 10 weeks, before being assigned to a unit where training continues along specialised paths. Officers are similarly drawn from those non-commissioned soldiers who pass an officer candidate exam. Promotion and candidate exams can be sat as manyt times as an individual desires but no more frequently than once a term.

The ground force maintains several bases on Alignment member worlds, most located on planets in the Za'tachk subsector. Each base is capable of undertaking its initial training of recruits. Most ground force recruits rarely leave the planetary base where they were trained.

The ground forces are commanded by three rearmost generals, generally stationed at Loza'tch. While they do not have a seat on the grand commission, the rearmost generals are members of a small council which directly advises the secretary. They report directly to the secretaries of the Grand Bureau of Defence.

The rearmost generals routinely undertake inspection tours, visiting all the ground force bases in the Alignment. Their adviser role falls to three rear generals when they undertake such tours.

The ground forces are divided into several corps, each with its own commander. The main combat corps are the Corp of Infantry, the Corp of Aviation and the Armoured Corp. Several non-combat corps undertake administrative or educational roles. Units from most corps are stationed at each ground force base under the command of a rear general.

ARMY OPERATIONS

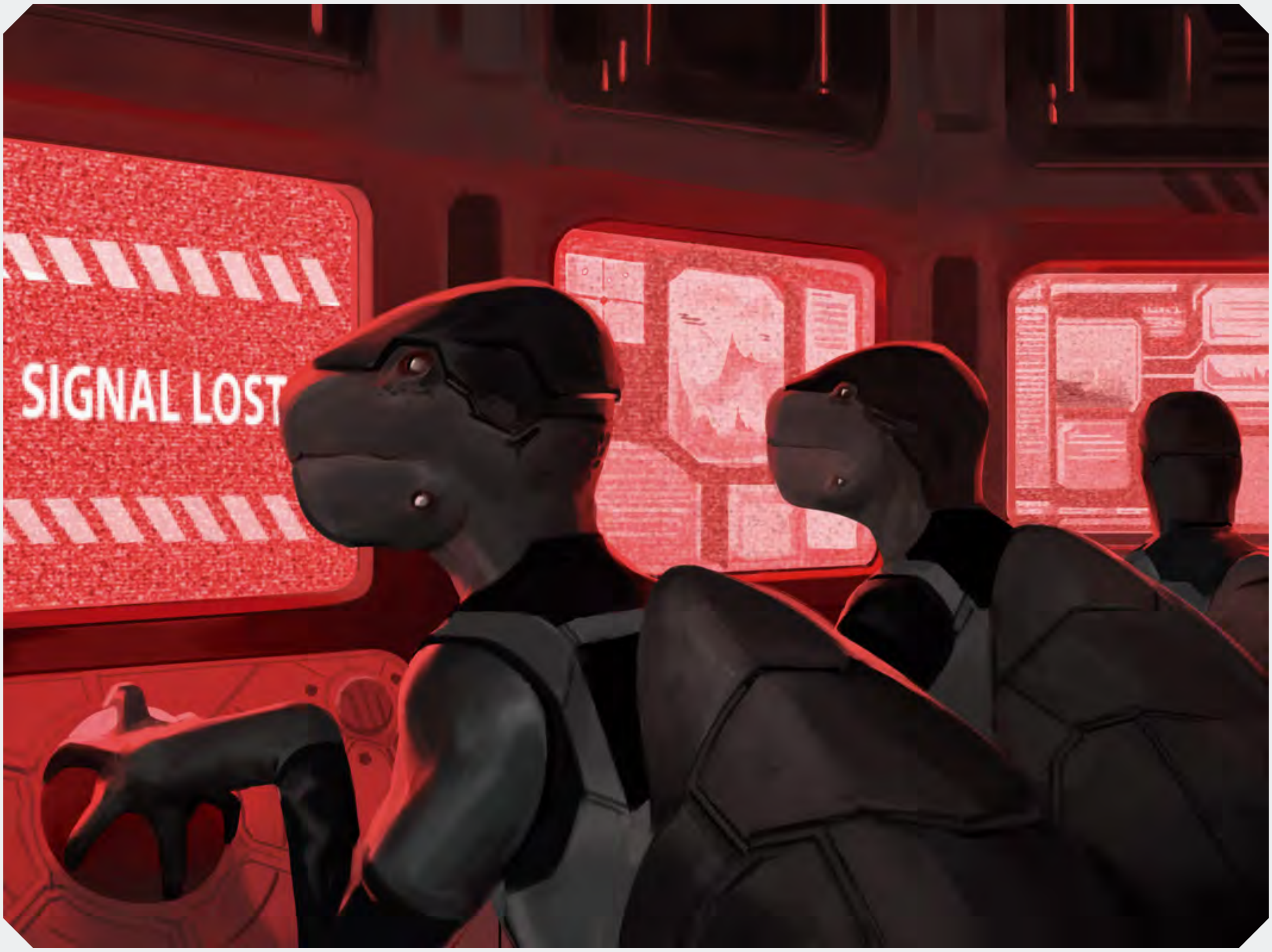
Given their fear of direct confrontation, the Interstellar Ground Forces do not use living troops – instead, combatants known as drone jockeys are trained in the remote piloting of armed and armoured drones. Units will always be formed in numbers divisible by three, comprising light and heavy infantry, armoured and aviation drones.

Drone jockeys are always located far from the theatre of conflict, where they are safe from harm. Naturally, this form of combat does have its shortfalls, particularly in electronic warfare. This becomes less of an issue with the advent of laser and meson communications.

The Za'tachk army's combat philosophy is one of using overwhelming force to outnumber and out-manoeuvre opponents as quickly and efficiently as possible. As troops are rarely placed in any immediate physical danger, the only limitation to their forces is budgetary.

Army forces have many communication and electronics-trained troops formed into their units. Their task is to use electronic warfare to keep communication lines open between 'front line' troops and their equipment.

The army maintains a stance of long-distance combat only. At any sign of an enemy force presenting a direct threat to living Za'tachk personnel, orders are given to make a fighting retreat to safer grounds.



ZA'TACHK TRAVELLERS

Za'tachk Travellers follow the same procedures and concepts as human Travellers, as detailed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*.

ZA'TACHK

Za'tachk Travellers have the following modifiers to their characteristics: STR+1

Za'tachk Matriarch Travellers have the following additional modifiers to their characteristics: INT+1, EDU+1, BOL-1.

Za'tachk Scout Travellers have the following additional modifiers to their characteristics: INT-1, EDU-1, BOL+1.

BOLDNESS

The Boldness (BOL) characteristic measures a Za'tachk's will, courage and sense of self-preservation. A Za'tachk with a low BOL has a strong sense of self-preservation and understands the need to protect itself from dangerous situations.

A BOL of 7+ indicates the Za'tachk has an insufficient sense of self-preservation – in other words, is courageous and has the willpower to continue on in the face of danger – and is seen as somewhat mentally unstable in the eyes of other Za'tachk. Higher BOL indicates a greater sense of courage and willpower and therefore, less mental stability. A BOL of 10+ indicates a Za'tachk considered insane by their fellows. Traveller Za'tachk tend to have a higher BOL characteristic than their non-adventuring counterparts.

BOL is calculated as 1D+1.

Whenever Za'tachk are in a potential or actual physically dangerous situation, they must make an Average (8+) BOL check to continue acting normally. If they fail, they must retreat immediately to a place of safety. If unable to retreat, they will fall to the ground, tuck their head and legs under their body, and remain that way until the danger has passed. If a BOL check is failed by an Effect -6 or worse, they will not retreat but drop immediately to the ground and enter a catatonic state for a number of rounds equal to the negative Effect of their failed check before being able to make another BOL check.

The Referee may also require a BOL check if Za'tachk Travellers are involved in risky endeavours such as a chancy business deal, meeting an important official or breaking the law. In these instances, the Referee should allow a positive DM based on what the ramifications of failure would be, such as choosing a safer option or remaining indecisive.

ZA'TACHK TRAITS

Za'tachk Travellers all possess the following traits:

Brachiator: Za'tachk are exemplary climbers and may use all their limbs as either locomotors or manipulators. They gain DM+2 when climbing or swinging. If they are on unstable or precarious flooring and there are handholds available, they gain DM+2 to any check used to stabilise themselves or maintain their footing.

Coward: Za'tachk are psychologically timid and frightened of physical violence, aggression and conflict. If a Za'tachk is threatened or attacked at a range of 50 metres or less, they must make an immediate BOL check. This will usually be at Average (8+) difficulty but may be modified by circumstances. If the Za'tachk fails the check, they must immediately abandon what they are doing and make a defensive action. This may mean running away, seeking higher ground or hiding behind a crewmate. If the roll has an Effect of -6 or less, the Za'tachk will immediately drop to the ground, tuck their head and limbs under their body and enter a catatonic state for a number of rounds equal to the Effect of their failed roll before being able to make another BOL check. If the check is passed, the Za'tachk has overcome their instinctual fear and may act normally but will suffer DM-2 on all actions made whilst under such a threat.

ZA'TACHK HONORIFICS

If a group includes a Za'tachk with a high SOC and low BOL, one of the following suggestions are recommended:

- Offspring of an honoured Za'tachk may carry a great deal of societal weight without having an honorific of their own.
- The Traveller may possess the honorific – but does not have the courage to hold the position.
- SOC and BOL need not be tied to honorifics – celebrities, for example, command a high/low score in these characteristics. A Traveller's career might explain why they possess a high SOC and a low BOL. However, it is also possible for the Traveller to be known for being known, much like some celebrities on other worlds.

If a title is desired, the Za'tachk Honorifics table provides a suitable link between specific honorifics and SOC/BOL, and a comparison of Noble titles in the Third Imperium and their approximate Za'tachk counterparts.

Za'tachk Honorifics

Honorific	SOC	BOL	Imperial Noble Title
Poh'Nulado	11	5 or less	Knight
Puth'Nulado	12	4 or less	Baron
Ves'Nulado	13	3 or less	Marquis
Lo'Nulado	14	2 or less	Count
Xe'Nulado	15	1	Duke
Nulado	16	1	Archduke
Nulado'eNulado	17	1	Emperor

Poh'Nulado: Meaning 'next to rearmost', this title is typically reserved for the matriarchs who serve in a world's ruling council. They have significant power in the bureaus they oversee and therefore command great respect.

Puth'Nulado: Meaning 'third from rearmost', this title is reserved for successful, influential managers and owners of large corporations and organisations. While they do not hold the power of the Poh'Nulado, they can still access enormous amounts of resources and manpower.

Ves'Nulado: Meaning 'fourth from rearmost', this title is reserved for matriarchs who head powerful nests or Za'tachk who are business and administration executives.

Lo'Nulado: Meaning 'fifth from rearmost', this title is usually reserved for high level managers and administrators, such as members of a board of directors.

Xe'Nulado: 'meaning sixth from rearmost', this title is the lowest honorific, used to address the matriarchs who head powerful and important nests or other high-level managers and administrators below the level of director.

Nulado: This title, meaning 'rearmost', refers to a matriarch leader or manager. It is normally reserved for the most important matriarchs in Za'tachk society such as the rearmost secretary of a world. It is a sign of respect, indicating the individual is so important that other Za'tachk must stand in front of them in the face of danger.

Nulado'eNulado: This is the highest honorific awarded to a matriarch and is normally reserved for the first secretary of a world or the first secretary of the Za'tachk Alignment.

Heightened Senses: Za'tachk can see into the infrared spectrum but have difficulty seeing clearly in bright light. This allows them to see heat and thermal signatures. Objects which are warmer than the ambient temperature appear in shades of red, graduating to orange, yellow and finally white for the hottest temperatures. Objects cooler than the ambient temperature appear in various shades of blue, graduating to purple and finally black for the coldest temperatures. All Za'tachk receive DM+2 to any Recon and Survival checks in darkness but suffer DM-2 to any check requiring sight in bright conditions. The penalty in bright light can be avoided if the Za'tachk wears light-reducing lenses.

TITLES

Za'tachk do not have a system of heredity nobility but certain honorifics exist for those viewed with respect and deference. If a Za'tachk is awarded a noble title from another species or world, they will adopt the title in situations which warrant its use but it will mean nothing to them.

Za'tachk Travellers with a high SOC and low BOL are the cream of their society, seen as leaders of the community and exemplifying the best Za'tachk characteristics. This can easily be seen as a form of nobility but, in reality, it is a formal manner of addressing those recognised as social superiors.

However, while Za'tachk all recognise these honorifics, not everyone with a high SOC and low BOL is awarded an honorific. Those who hold such have many duties and obligations that may preclude them from a life of adventure. After all, a typical nulado may reign over an entire world and Travellers will generally want to explore the universe rather than be engaged in constant administration.

STARTING AGE

Za'tachk Travellers begin their careers at an age based on their sex. Scouts and Homesteaders start their careers at 10 and Matriarchs begin their careers at 15.

BACKGROUND SKILLS

Za'tachk gain background skills at level 0 like other sophonts, receiving a number of skills equal to their EDU DM+3. These skills may be chosen from those listed in the *Travellers Core Rulebook*, page 8. Za'tachk Travellers must include the Admin skill at level 0 as one of their background skills.

PRE-CAREER EDUCATION

Za'tachk Travellers may use the Pre-Career Education options in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*, page 14, but may only choose university. There are no military academies in the Za'tachk Alignment.

THE DRAFT

Za'tachk do not utilise the draft. Travellers who fail to qualify for a career must enter either the Drifter or Rogue careers.

CAREERS

Za'tachk Travellers use the career generation system as detailed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. Careers a Traveller may enter are limited by their sex.

Matriarchs are leaders and decision makers among the Za'tachk. They are permitted to enter the Citizen (corporate), Drifter, Merchant, Noble, Rogue and Scholar careers.

Homesteaders are typically restricted to administration, education, child-rearing, crafts, management and the distribution of basic goods and services. They are permitted to enter the Citizen, Drifter, Entertainer, Merchant, Rogue and Scholar careers.

Scouts cover exploration, hunting, defence, policing and performing heavy labour. They are permitted to enter the Agent, Citizen (worker or colonist), Drifter, Rogue and Scout careers. Scouts may choose to enter the Army (support) or Navy careers as described in the *Traveller Core Rulebook* – these scouts either come from multi-species worlds or have joined the army or navy of another polity.

Those who enter the Za'tachk Alignment army or navy should use the Za'tachk Interstellar Ground Force or Za'tachk Interstellar Space Force careers instead.

Careers

Career	Assignment	Qualification	Survival	Advancement
Za'tachk Interstellar Ground Force		END 5+		
	Support		END 3+	EDU 9+
	Light Drone Jockey		DEX 6+	EDU 8+
	Heavy Drone Jockey		DEX 8+	INT 7+
Za'tachk Interstellar Space Force		INT 6+		
	Crew/Gunner		INT 6+	EDU 8+
	Engineer/Flight		INT 5+	EDU 6+
	Drone Jockey		DEX 7+	EDU 7+

Za'tachk Interstellar Ground Force: The Za'tachk Interstellar Ground Force is the Za'tachk Alignment's army. Each regiment is formed from forces gathered from the worlds of the Za'tachk Alignment. They rely on drones and other remote equipment for combat while remaining safe behind the front line.

Za'tachk Interstellar Space Force: The Za'tachk Interstellar Space Force patrols the territory of the Za'tachk Alignment, protecting the area from invasive forces and deterring piracy and other illegal interstellar activities.

ZA'TACHK LIFE EVENTS

The life events of the Za'tachk are simar to those of humans. Use the Life Events table in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*, page 44.

AGEING

Ageing differs for Za'tachk based on the sex of the Traveller.

Infertile scouts and homesteaders begin ageing after two terms, making an ageing roll each term thereafter. Each ageing roll has a penalty of DM-4.

Fertile scouts and homesteaders begin ageing after four terms and make an ageing roll each term thereafter. Each ageing roll has a penalty of DM-2.

Matriarchs begin ageing at six terms and make an ageing roll each term thereafter. Each ageing roll has a bonus of DM+2.

MUSTERING OUT

Za'tachk Travellers use the mustering out system as detailed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*.

ROLEPLAYING ZA'TACHK

Almost all Za'tachk Travellers will be matriarchs, fertile homesteaders or scouts. Infertile homesteaders and scouts have too short a lifespan to make them suitable as Travellers.

Za'tachk are characterised by their cowardice. They hesitate to place themselves in any form of physical danger and are more inclined to act from a distance as a form of self-preservation. If their situation becomes dangerous, Za'tachk will attempt to retreat immediately to a position of safety. If unable to retreat, they must test their Boldness to remain where they are. This lack of courage can also manifest when Za'tachk perceive dangers other than physical, such as meeting an important individual or making a risky business deal. Za'tachk will always look for the safest way of achieving their goals and if one cannot be found they are more likely to abandon the attempt than pursue it.

Za'tachk are also highly organised. They will always find disorganisation distasteful, with more significant disorganisation resulting in greater disgust. A Za'tachk will personally avoid any form of disorder. Within Traveller groups, for example, they will want to know where they stand in the hierarchy, including who is superior or inferior to them.

This desire to know their place will be evident in all their interactions – Za'tachk become extremely uncomfortable if they do not know where they stand. This extends to not only their immediate companions but also their larger organisational and societal positions. Za'tachk also expect those inferior to them to follow their commands, while they will follow the orders of those superior to them.

1 ZA'TACHK INTERSTELLAR GROUND FORCE

Members of the Za'tachk army. These soldiers deal with planetary surface actions, battles and campaigns.

Qualification: END 5+
Commission: SOC 5+ and BOL 6-

ASSIGNMENTS

Choose one of the following:

Support: You are an engineer, cook or in some other role behind the front lines.
Light Jockey: You are trained in controlling the light drones of the ground force.
Heavy Jockey: You are trained in controlling the heavy drones of the ground force.

CAREER PROGRESS

	SURVIVAL	ADVANCEMENT
Support	END 3+	EDU 7+
Light Drone Jockey	DEX 6+	EDU 6+
Heavy Drone Jockey	DEX 7+	EDU 5+

MUSTERING OUT BENEFITS

1D	CASH	BENEFITS
1	Cr2000	INT +1
2	Cr5000	EDU +1
3	Cr10000	DEX +1
4	Cr10000	STR +1
5	Cr15000	BOL +1
6	Cr20000	BOL +1
7	Cr25000	SOC +1

SKILLS AND TRAINING

1D	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	SERVICE SKILLS	ADVANCED EDUCATION (MIN. EDU 8+)	OFFICER (COMMISSIONED ONLY)
1	DEX +1	Drive	Electronics (comms)	Tactics (military)
2	DEX +1	Electronics	Electronics (comms)	Leadership
3	EDU +1	Mechanic	Electronics (sensors)	Admin
4	Carouse	Recon	Navigation	Advocate
5	Electronics	Gun Combat	Leadership	Pilot (small craft)
6	BOL +1	Flyer	Tactics	Tactics (military)

1D	SUPPORT	LIGHT JOCKEY	HEAVY JOCKEY
1	Drive	Drive	Drive
2	Flyer	Flyer	Flyer
3	Electronics	Electronics (remote ops)	Electronics (remote ops)
4	Mechanic	Electronics (remote ops)	Electronics (remote ops)
5	Medic	Recon	Pilot (small craft)
6	Steward	Recon	Recon

RANKS AND BONUSES

RANK	ENLISTED	SKILL OR BONUS	RANK	ENLISTED	SKILL OR BONUS
0	Yruck	Mechanic	3	Danwen	Gun Combat 1
1	Yruckan	—	4	Wenxoo	Leadership 1
2	Wena	—	5	Xoo	—
			6	Garxoo	Tactics (military) 1

EVENTS

2D	EVENT
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You garrison on a major military base with access to a wide range of recreational facilities. Gain one of Carouse, Gambling, Streetwise or Survival.
4	You are stationed at a boring billet and take up gambling to pass the time. Roll BOL 8+. If you succeed, gain D3 additional Benefit rolls this term. If you fail, lose your Benefit for this term. In either case, gain one level in Gambler.
5	Your drone is caught between two fighting units. If you stand your ground and fight your way out, make an Electronics (remote ops) roll 8+. If you succeed, Gain one of Drive (any), Electronics (any) or Flyer (any). If you fail, lose your Benefit for this term.
6	Your commanding officer selects you for advanced training. Roll BOL 8+ to gain one of Admin 1, Advocate 1, Electronics 1, Engineer 1 or Mechanic 1.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Event table.
8	You lead a surgical strike of great importance and your judgement is commended. Gain one of Leadership, Tactics (military) or take DM+4 on your next advancement roll.
9	You discover your superior officer is involved in criminal activities. If you cover for them, gain them as an Ally. If you wish to turn them in, roll BOL 8+. If you succeed you are commended for your actions and are automatically advanced or gain a commission. If you fail, you cannot roll for advancement or commission this term. In either case, you gain the officer as an Enemy.
10	You spend time acting as your commanding officer's executive assistant. Roll EDU 6+ to gain Admin 1.
11	You are challenged to a test of skill by a rival. If you refuse, lose SOC -1. Accept and roll your highest skill 8+. If you fail, lose all benefits from this term. If you succeed, gain DM+2 to your next advancement roll.
12	You come up with an innovative tactic during an exercise which proves to be exceptionally effective. You are either promoted or automatically commissioned to officer rank.

MISHAPS

1D	MISHAP
1	Severely injured (this is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury table). Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury Table and take the lower result
2	Your unit's drones are demolished in a disastrous battle, for which you blame your commanding officer. Gain them as an Enemy as they have you removed from the service.
3	You were ordered to participate in a black ops mission that goes against your conscience. You refused and were ejected from the service.
4	You quarrel with a superior officer. Gain the officer as a Rival as they drive you out of the service.
5	You accidentally destroy a fellow soldier's drone in a friendly fire situation. Roll Advocate 8+. If you succeed you are not charged but forced out of the service. If you fail, you are charged and forced from the service. If you roll a 2, you must take the Prisoner career for your next term. Regardless of the result, gain the fellow as an enemy.
6	You are wounded in the line of duty. Roll on the Injury table.

RANKS AND BONUSES (CONT.)

RANK	OFFICER	SKILL OR BONUS	RANK	OFFICER	SKILL OR BONUS
1	Sper	Leadership 1	4	Disa	—
2	Goc	—	5	Tarn	BOL +1
3	Van Goc	Tactics (military) 1	6	Xok	SOC 10 or SOC +1, whichever is higher

2 ZA'TACHK INTERSTELLAR SPACE FORCE

This interstellar navy patrols the space between the stars. The Za'tachk Interstellar Space Force's responsibilities primarily involve defending the polity's borders from enemy powers and showing the population they are protected.

Qualification: INT 6+
Commission: EDU 8+ and BOL 5-

ASSIGNMENTS

Choose one of the following:

Crew/Gunner: You are one of the crew with basic duties required for the smooth operation of a vessel.
Engineer/Flight: You operate the engines or control the flight of a vessel.
STOG: You are part of the Special Tactical Operations Group who remotely operate drones from the safety of your vessel.

CAREER PROGRESS

	SURVIVAL	ADVANCEMENT
Crew/Gunner	INT 6+	EDU 8+
Engineer/Flight	INT 5+	EDU 6+
STOG	DEX 7+	EDU 7+

MUSTERING OUT BENEFITS

1D	CASH	BENEFITS
1	Cr1000	Personal Vehicle or Ship Share
2	Cr3000	INT +1
3	Cr5000	EDU +1
4	Cr10000	Ship Share
5	Cr20000	Drone or Weapon
6	Cr25000	Two Ship Shares
7	Cr50000	SOC +1 and BOL +1

SKILLS AND TRAINING

1D	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	SERVICE SKILLS	ADVANCED EDUCATION (MIN. EDU 8+)	OFFICER (COMMISSIONED ONLY)
1	INT +1	Pilot	Electronics	Leadership
2	EDU +1	Mechanic	Astrogation	Electronics
3	SOC +1	Electronics	Engineer	Pilot
4	Carouse	Gunner	Mechanics	Admin
5	Electronics	Vacc Suit	Admin	Tactics
6	BOL +1	Gun Combat	Advocate	Engineer

1D	CREW/GUNNER	ENGINEER/FLIGHT	STOG
1	Electronics	Engineer	Drive
2	Mechanic	Mechanic	Flyer
3	Gunner	Electronics	Electronics (remote ops)
4	Flyer	Astrogation	Electronics (remote ops)
5	Vacc Suit	Pilot	Recon
6	Steward	Flyer	Recon

RANKS AND BONUSES

RANK	ENLISTED	SKILL OR BONUS	RANK	OFFICER	SKILL OR BONUS
0	Qiar	Vacc Suit 1	1	Rey	Leadership 1
1	Ark	—	2	Xlux	—
2	Arkao	Mechanic 1	3	Xluxon	—
3	Avain	Gun Combat (any) 1	4	Xluxonas	Tactics (naval)1
4	Avainup	—	5	Zaq	BOL +1
5	Hal	Leadership 1	6	Zaqaoq	SOC +1
6	Haknux	—	—	—	SOC 10 or SOC +1, whichever is higher

EVENTS

2D	EVENT
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You embarrass your commanding officer at an important social event. Roll Diplomat 8+, if you succeed you manage to smooth things over but gain the officer as a Rival. If you fail you cannot roll for promotion or commission this term and gain the officer as an Enemy.
4	You are given advanced training in a specialist field. Roll BOL 8+ to gain one level in any skill you already have.
5	You are given a special assignment or duty on board ship. Gain DM+1 to any one Benefit roll.
6	You help out a superior officer in an area where their skills are lacking. Gain them as an Ally.
7	Life Event. Toll on the Life Event table.
8	Your direct competition in the agency has left themselves open for a career crippling move on your part. Do it and ruin their life, gaining DM+4 on your next advancement roll and gain them as an Enemy.
9	You stumble across a crime on board ship. If you choose to cover up the crime, roll Deception 8+. If you succeed, gain an additional Benefit roll for this term. If you fail, you are also thought to be involved in the crime and lose your Benefit roll for this term. If you choose to come clean, roll BOL 8+. If you succeed you gain the perpetrator of the crime as an Enemy and DM+4 to your next advancement roll. If you fail, the criminal gets away and you gain an Enemy. If you roll a 2 on either check, you must take the Prisoner career for your next term.
10	Your commanding officer takes an interest in your career. Either gain Tactics (naval) 1 or DM+4 to your next Advancement roll thanks to their aid.
11	Through your inaction you cause a collision between two spacecraft. Your next advancement or commission roll suffers DM-4.
12	You display great self-preservation in battle saving the whole ship. You automatically pass your next promotion or commission roll and gain BOL+1.

Continue

MISHAPS

1D	MISHAP
1	Severely injured (this is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury table). Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury Table and take the lower result.
2	Placed in frozen watch (cryogenically stored on board ship) and revived improperly. Reduce STR, DEX or END by -1 due to muscle wastage. You are not ejected from this career.
3	During a battle, defeat or victory depends on your actions. You must make an 8+ check using a skill which depends on your branch – Electronics (sensors) or Gunner if you are bridge crew, Mechanic or Vacc Suit if you are engineering crew, or Electronics (remote ops) if you are STOG. If you fail, the ship suffers severe damage and you are blamed for the disaster. You are court-martialled and discharged. If you succeed, your efforts ensure you are honourably discharged but keep your Benefit roll from this term. If you roll a 2, you must take the Prisoner career on your next term.
4	You are blamed for an accident which causes the death of several crewmembers. If you were responsible, you gain one free roll on the Skills and Training tables before you are ejected from the career as your guilt drives you to excel. If you were not, then gain the officer who blamed you as an Enemy but you keep your Benefit roll from this term.
5	A failing on your part causes a catastrophic loss in your ship or base. You lose BOL -1. In addition, the only other survivor becomes your Enemy.
6	You are wounded in the line of duty. Roll on the Injury table.

CENTRAL SUPPLY CATALOGUE: ZA'TACHK

Za'tachk goods are not easily obtained outside of the Za'tachk Alignment or on worlds where Za'tachk are uncommon. Because of their unusual hand structure, tools and equipment not explicitly designed for Za'tachk or Hivers will impose DM-2. Likewise, another sophont trying to use a tool or weapon designed specifically for Za'tachk will also suffer a penalty of DM-2.

Many items in the *Central Supply Catalogue* can be found among the Za'tachk, modified to suit their physiology and design aesthetics. All purchases outside of the Za'tachk Alignment or Hive Federation of items designed specifically for Za'tachk will cost an additional 15%.

ROBOTS

Za'tachk do not feel safe with autonomous robots among them. They do not trust thinking machines will not endanger them in some way. Even the most basic autonomous robot can cause deep seated fear in most Za'tachk. Therefore, all Za'tachk robots are drones controlled by a living operator.

Za'tachk tend to build their robots with a body similar to their own. Robots often have four limbs they can walk on or use to manipulate objects interchangeably, with sensors and vodars located collectively at the front. Robots used by the military can be heavily armed but those operated by civilians will only be minimally armed, if at all, and then only with weapons which do minimal to no damage.

CAOUA LIGHT INFANTRY DRONE

Named after a fast predator native to Loza'tch, the Caoua light infantry drone is a Za'tachk-sized drone which is lightly armoured and designed for speed. They are intended to race across the battlefield and inflict as much damage as possible. All four of its limbs are also manipulators, making it a versatile weapon able to run and climb with equal ease. Light infantry drones routinely carry a laser rifle.

Robot	Hits	Speed	TL	Cost
Caoua Light Infantry Drone	20	12m	14	Cr120000
Locomotion	Walker			
Skills	Athletics (dexterity) 1, Athletics (strength) 1, Gun Combat (energy) 2, Melee (unarmed) 2, Recon 3, Stealth 1			
Attacks	Laser Rifle (5D+3, Zero-G)			
Manipulators	4 X (STR 9 DEX 9)			
Endurance	58 hours			
Traits	Armour (+16), ATV, (idle), Heightened Senses, IR/UV Vision,			
Programming	None or Drone (INT 0)			
Options	Audible Sensor, Audible Sensor (broad spectrum), Drone Interface, Encryption Module, Fire Control System (enhanced), PRIS Sensor, Recon Sensor (advanced), Satellite Uplink, Stealth (basic), Tightbeam Communicator, Transceiver 500km (improved), Vacuum Environment Protection, Visual Spectrum Sensor, Voder Speaker, Weapon Mount (medium), Wireless Data Link			

ANAROTH HEAVY INFANTRY DRONE

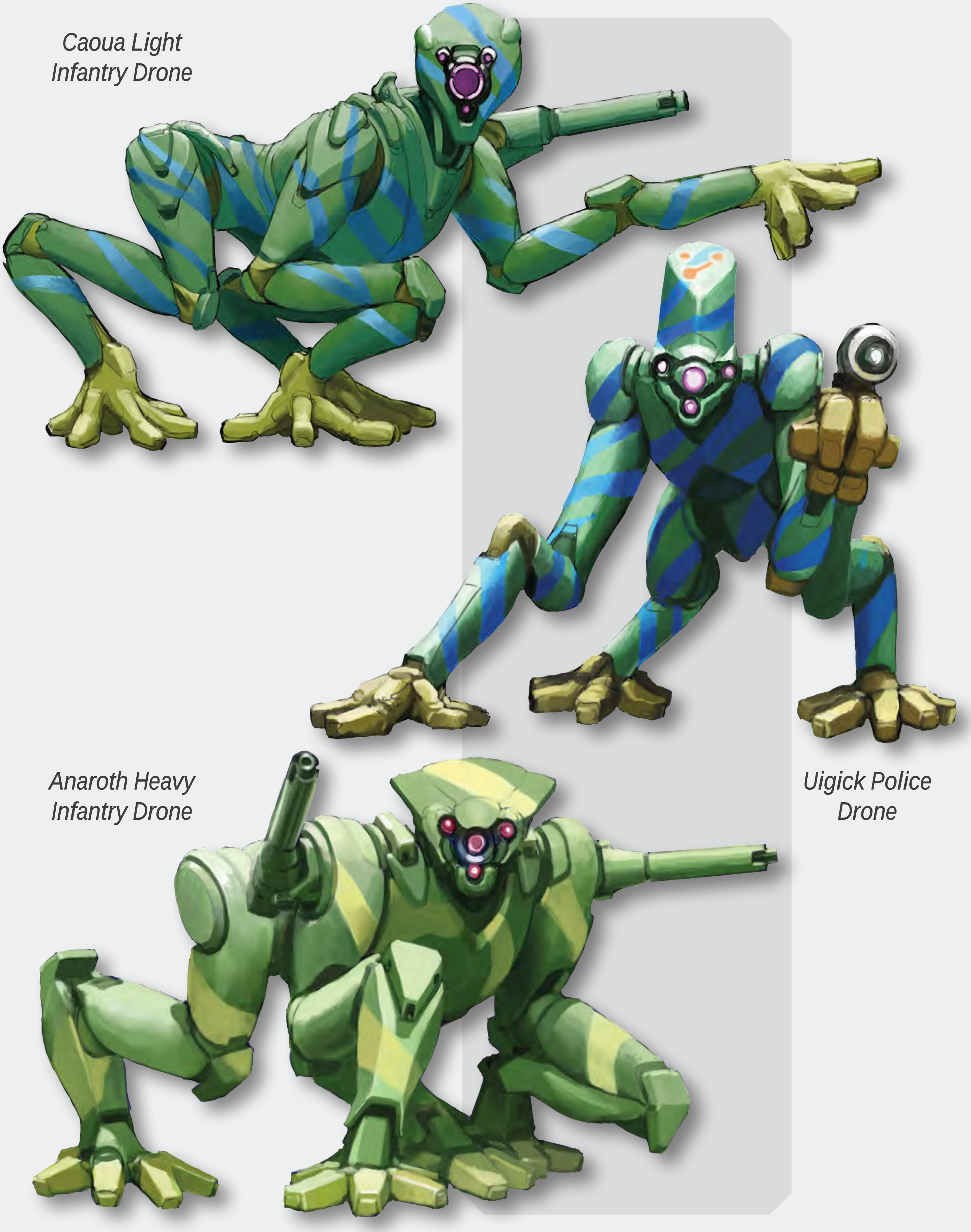
The heavy infantry drone is named after another native animal form from Ilelish – a heavy, short-tempered herbivore. The bulky Anaroth is surprisingly fast for its size and capable of keeping up with the shift and flow of combat. With four limbs, both manipulators, the Anaroth presents a terrifying image as it runs across the field or comes swinging through trees. While its mounted weapons are not the heaviest, the Anaroth has the strength to carry and use bulky and heavy weaponry for specific missions.

Robot	Hits	Speed	TL	Cost
Anaroth Heavy Infantry Drone	32	9m	14	Cr380000
Locomotion	Walker			
Skills	Athletics (dexterity) 1, Athletics (strength) 3, Gun Combat (energy) 3, Gun Combat (slug) 3, Melee (unarmed) 3, Recon 3, Stealth 1			
Attacks	Gauss Rifle (4D, AP 5, Auto 3, Scope), Stagger Laser Rifle (5D+3, Auto 3, Zero-G)			
Manipulators	4 X (STR 17 DEX 12)			
Endurance	101 hours			
Traits	Armour (+25), ATV, Large (+1), (idle), Heightened Senses, IR/UV Vision,			
Programming	None or Drone (INT 0)			
Options	Audible Sensor, Audible Sensor (broad spectrum), Drone Interface, Encryption Module, Fire Control System (enhanced) x2, PRIS Sensor, Recon Sensor (advanced), Satellite Uplink, Transceiver 500km (improved), Stealth (basic), Tightbeam Communicator, Visual Spectrum Sensor, Voder Speaker, Vacuum Environment Protection, Weapon Mount (medium) x2, Wireless Data Link			

UIGICK POLICE DRONE

The police drone is a common sight on the streets of Za'tachk city streets. Resembling nothing more than a lightly armoured Za'tachk, the drone allows safe patrolling and response without endangering the operator. Armed with a kaath pistol, the police drone can disable criminals without endangering their lives. If necessary, the Uigick can be armed with other equipment.

Robot	Hits	Speed	TL	Cost
Uigick Police Drone	21	9m	12	Cr110000
Locomotion	Walker			
Skills	Athletics (dexterity) 1, Athletics (strength) 1, Melee (unarmed) 2, Recon 2, Stealth 1			
Attacks	Kaath Pistol (Stun)			
Manipulators	4 X (STR 9 DEX 9)			
Endurance	50 hours			
Traits	Armour (+10), ATV, Heightened Senses, IR/UV Vision,			
Programming	None or Drone (INT 0)			
Options	Audible Sensor, Audible Sensor (broad spectrum), Drone Interface, Encryption Module, Fire Control System (enhanced), Forensic Toolkit (enhanced), PRIS Sensor, Recon Sensor (enhanced), Stealth (basic), Transceiver 50km (improved), Visual Spectrum Sensor, Voder Speaker, Weapon Mount (medium), Wireless Data Link			



Caoua Light Infantry Drone

Uigick Police Drone

Anaroth Heavy Infantry Drone

WEAPONS

Za'tachk are opposed to using weapons but also understand that firearms are sometimes needed as a balancing force or deterrent. Za'tachk prefer to use weapons which will not cause permanent injury, especially amongst themselves. When facing other opponents although, Za'tachk are more likely to use overwhelming firepower to eradicate a danger before it becomes a threat.

ENERGY WEAPONS

All the weapons in this section use the Gun Combat (energy) skill.

KAATH PISTOL

The kaath pistol is a short, ranged weapon that causes the pleasure centre in the target's brain to fire uncontrollably, resulting in them becoming incapacitated as paroxysms of pleasure wrack their bodies. Despite being a non-lethal weapon, the kaath pistol is outlawed on many worlds outside the Za'tachk Alignment due to the addictive effects repeated use can cause.

KAATH RIFLE

The kaath rifle first appears at TL9 and has the same effects as a kaath pistol except for a greater range. At TL11, the kaath rifle is more effective and has a longer range. At TL12, the range is increased, as is the energy efficiency.

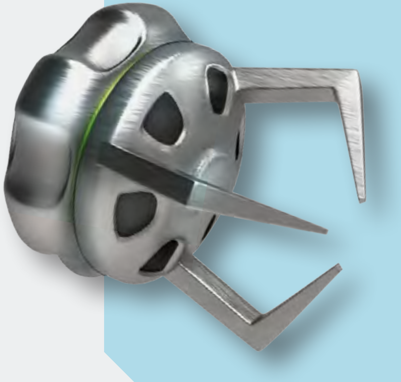
POCKET KAATH

At TL11, a miniaturised version of the kaath appears, able to be hidden effectively in the palm. It suffers from a short range and its energy cartridge is also smaller, reducing the number of shots available, but is as effective as the pistol and rifle versions.

At TL13, the pocket kaath is now small enough to be surgically implanted into the body. It has a slightly greater range and its energy efficiency is increased.

Kaath Pistol

Kaath Rifle



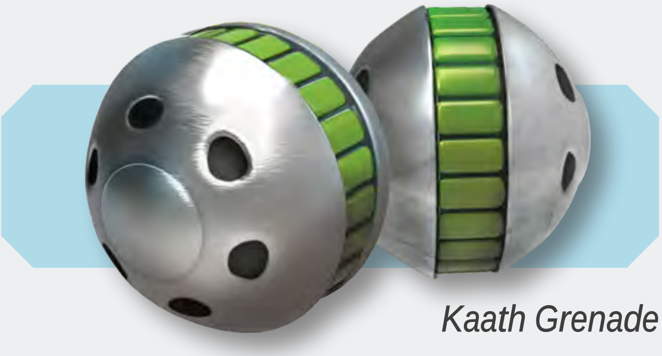
Pocket Kaath

Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Kg	Cost	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits
Kaath Pistol	10	10	—	3	Cr650	5	Cr50	Stun
Kaath Pistol	12	15	—	2	Cr850	10	Cr50	Stun
Kaath Rifle	9	20	—	8	Cr825	10	Cr50	Stun
Kaath Rifle	11	30	—	5	Cr1050	15	Cr50	Stun
Pocket Kaath	11	3	—	0.5	Cr1000	3	Cr75	Stun
Pocket Kaath	13	5	—	—	Cr1500	8	Cr75	Stun

GRENADE WEAPONS

If thrown by hand, the following weapon uses the Athletics (dexterity) skill or the Gun Combat (slug) skill if fired from a launcher.

Kaath Grenade: The kaath grenade operates similarly to the kaath pistol and like other kaath weapons is largely illegal outside of the Za'tachk Alignment. Kaath grenades are available as both hand-thrown and grenade launcher versions. Kaath grenades will always affect a target for a minimum of one round.



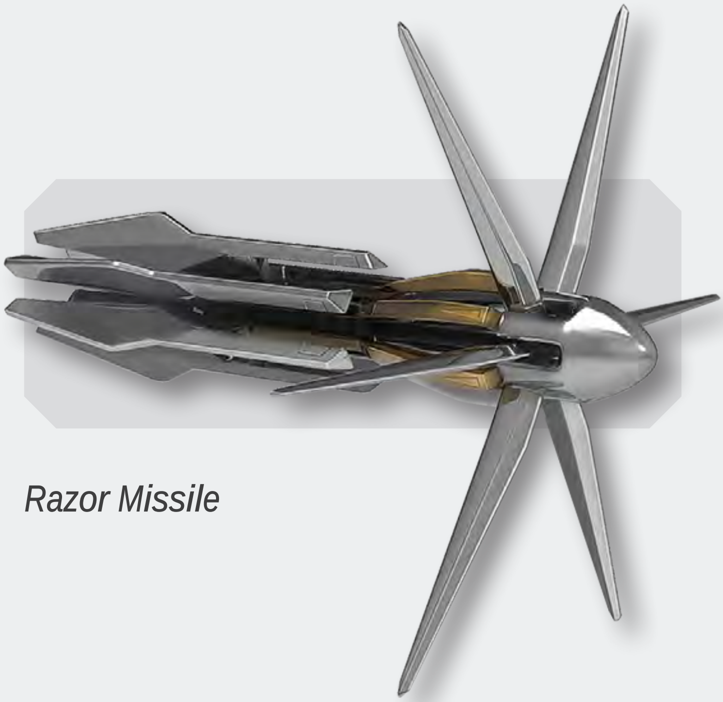
Kaath Grenade

Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Kg	Cost	Traits
Kaath Grenade	10	20	—	0.5	Cr500	Stun, Blast 3
Kaath Grenade	12	20	—	0.5	Cr850	Stun, Blast 5

VEHICLE WEAPONS

The following new weapons are designed to be mounted on vehicles. All ranges are in kilometres.

Razor Missile: Razor missiles are air-to-ground missiles explicitly designed to take out individuals without causing large amounts of collateral damage. They are warheadless missiles equipped with six long pop-up razor-like blades deployed a few seconds before the impact. The missile does not explode but shreds anything in its path.



Razor Missile

Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Tons	Spaces	Cost	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits
Razor Missile	7	11	5D	0.25	1	Cr150000	1	—	AP 4, Blast 1, One Use, Smart
Razor Missile	9	15	7D	0.25	1	Cr190000	1	—	AP 6, Blast 1, One Use, Smart
Razor Missile	12	18	9D	0.25	1	Cr230000	1	—	AP 8, Blast 1 One Use, Smart

VEHICLES OF THE ZA'TACHK

ANTHA RECON DRONE

The Antha Recon Drone is most often used as a surveillance device. With its stealth technology and long-range sensors, the drone can observe an area from some distance without being spotted. The drone is equipped with two hardpoints but is rarely armed. The Za'tachk armed forces are not above using Antha drones armed with razor missiles as a tool for assassination.

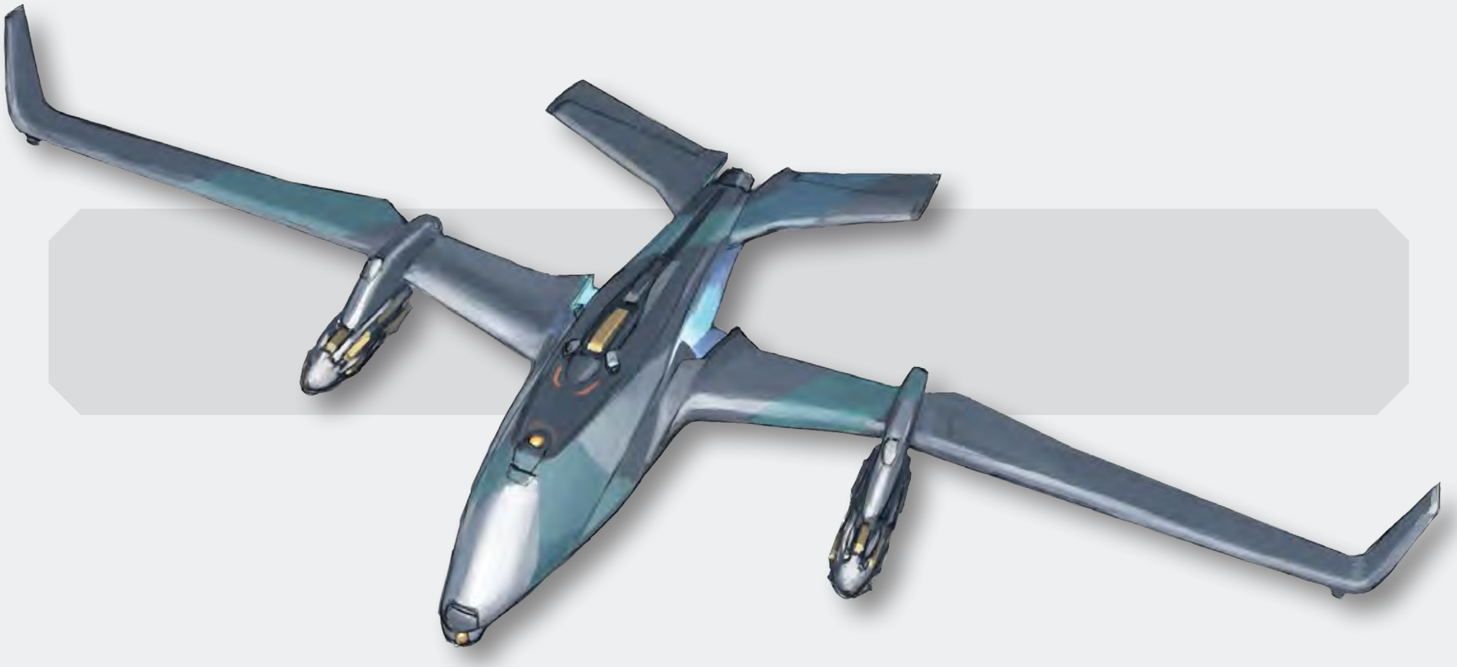
TL	14
SKILL	Electronics (remote ops)
AGILITY	+5
SPEED (CRUISE)	Very Fast (fast)
RANGE (CRUISE)	5,000 (7,500)
CREW	—
PASSENGERS	—
CARGO	0.25 tons
HULL	16
SHIPPING	4 tons
COST	Cr921200

Traits	—
Equipment	Actuator controls, Autopilot (advanced), Communications System (advanced, encrypted, meson communicator, satellite uplink), Control Interface (advanced), Control System (advanced), Drone, Navigation System (advanced), Sensors (advanced, hardened, increased range), Stealth
Weapons	Hardpoint (1 space) x2

Equipment	
Autopilot (skill level)	+3
Communications (range)	1,000km
Navigation (Navigation DM)	+4
Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM)	+2
Camouflage (Recon DM)	—
Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM)	-4

ARMOUR

FRONT	4	REAR	4	SIDES	4



ERUENOOPH SCOUT DRONE

The naming of the Eruenooph is somewhat misleading. While the walker is used in scouting, it is also exceedingly effective in infantry support and anti-infantry operations. Relying on its advanced camouflage, the walker is frequently kept hidden on the battlefield while it provides covering fire for advancing infantry drones. The walker's four legs provide a stable yet nimble platform, making it a reliable and favoured drone among Za'tachk jockeys.

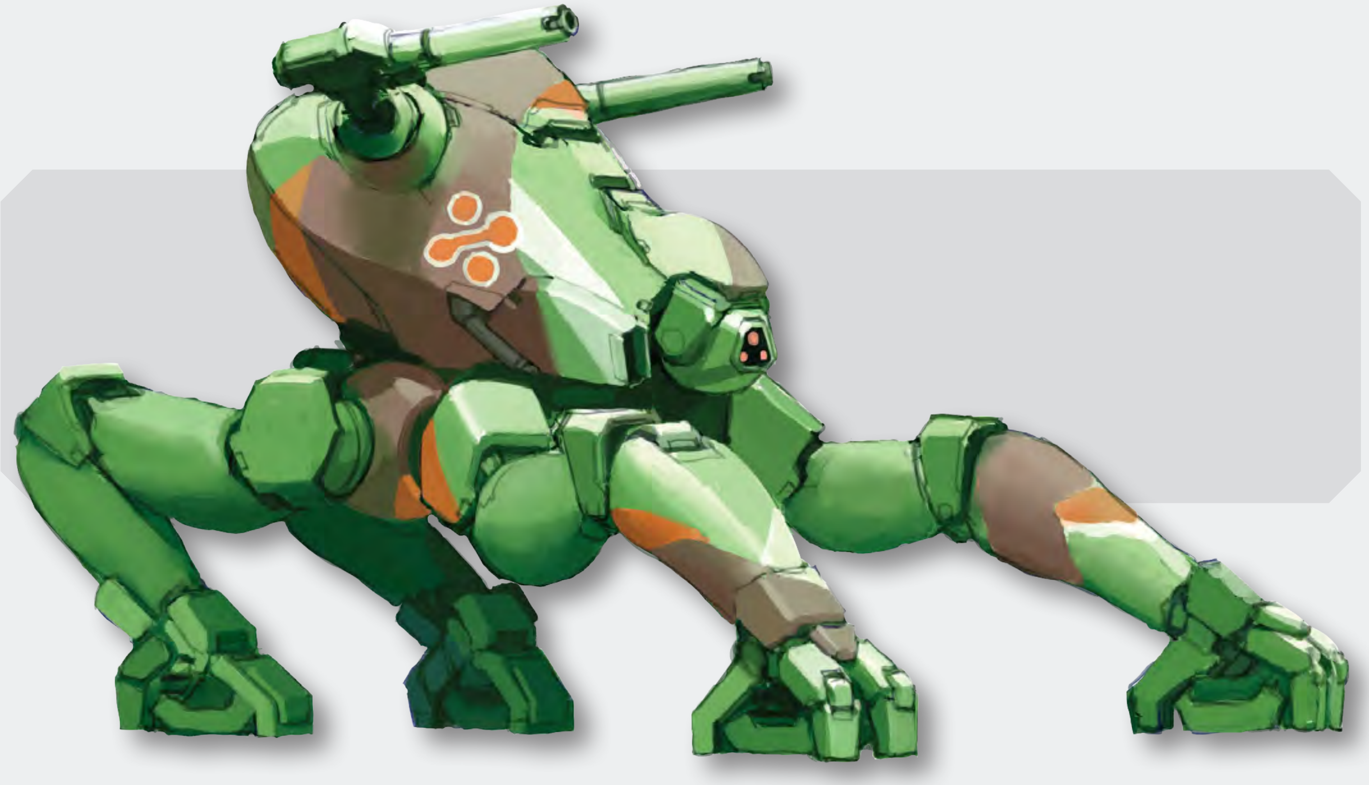
TL	14
SKILL	Electronics (remote ops)
AGILITY	+4
SPEED (CRUISE)	High (medium)
RANGE (CRUISE)	600 (900)
CREW	—
PASSENGERS	—
CARGO	—
HULL	60
SHIPPING	10
COST	MCr1.9

Traits	ATV
Equipment	Actuation System, Autopilot (advanced), Camouflage (advanced), Communications System (advanced, encrypted, meson communicator, satellite uplink), Control Interface (advanced), Control System (advanced), Decoy Dispenser, Drone, Navigation (advanced), Sensors (advanced, hardening, increased range)
Weapons	Fixed Mounts (gatling laser, front, linked) x2

Equipment	
Autopilot (skill level)	+3
Communications (range)	1,000km
Navigation (Navigation DM)	+4
Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM)	+1
Camouflage (Recon DM)	-4
Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM)	—

ARMOUR

FRONT	40	REAR	40	SIDES	40



Weapon	Range	Damage	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits	Fire Control
Gatling Laser	4	6D+6	—	—	AP 5, Auto 4	+4
Gatling Laser	4	6D+6	—	—	AP 5, Auto 4	+4

IDINPYX HEAVY AIRBORNE ATTACK DRONE

The Idinpyx is an armoured drone used primarily to soften targets before heavy ground artillery and infantry arrives. Armed with missiles, the drone is also armed with a linked pair of gatling lasers which can be used to defend itself from other aerial opponents. Grav lifters allow the drone to operate regardless of atmosphere, and even into orbit if necessary. These drones are normally used in threes.

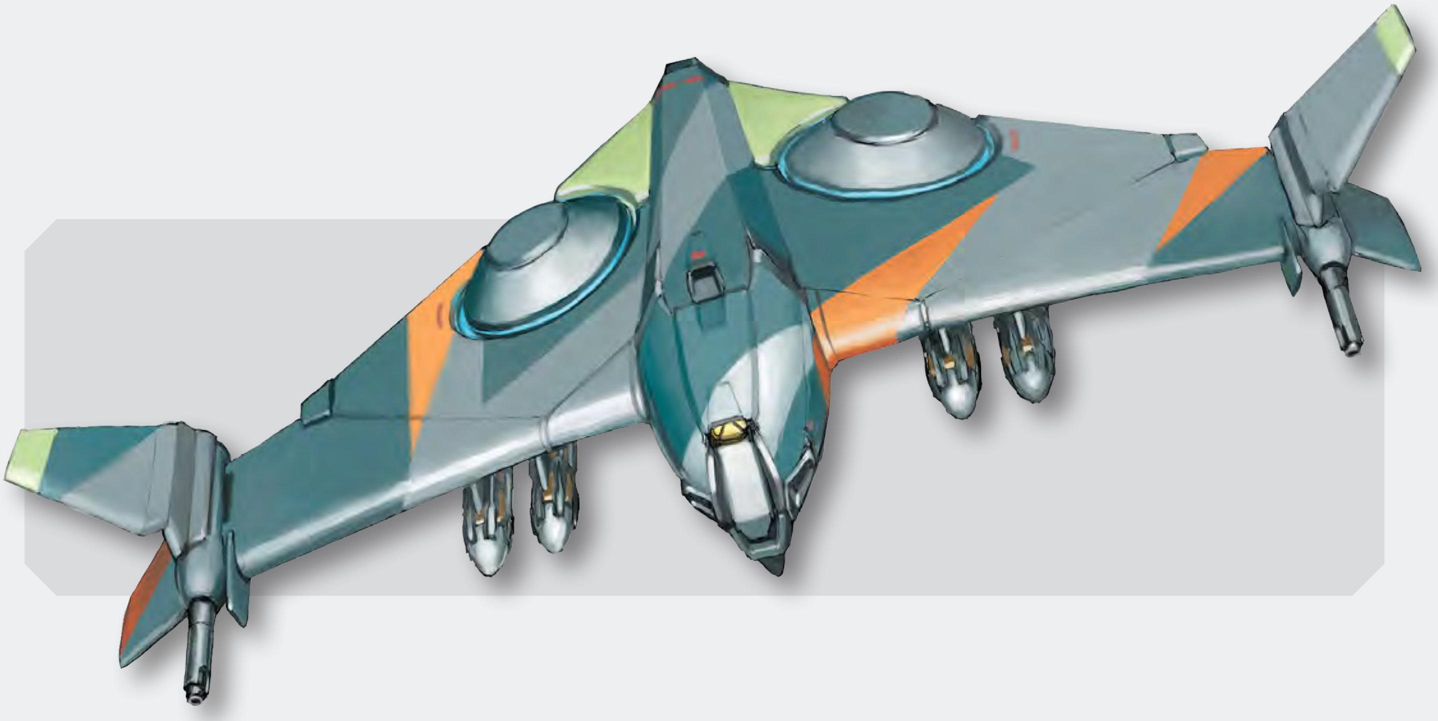
TL	14
SKILL	Electronics (remote ops)
AGILITY	+3
SPEED (CRUISE)	Very Fast (fast)
RANGE (CRUISE)	5,000 (7,500)
CREW	—
PASSENGERS	—
CARGO	2.25 tons
HULL	50
SHIPPING	12.5 tons
COST	MCr4.33

Traits	—
Equipment	Actuator controls, Anti-Missile System (advanced laser), Autopilot (advanced), Communications System (advanced, encrypted, meson communicator, satellite uplink), Control Interface (advanced), Control System (advanced), Decoy Dispenser, Drone, Navigation System (advanced), Sensors (advanced, hardened, increased range)
Weapons	Fixed Mounts (gatling laser, front, linked) x2 Hardpoints (4 Spaces) x2

Equipment	
Autopilot (skill level)	+3
Communications (range)	1,000km
Navigation (Navigation DM)	+4
Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM)	+2
Camouflage (Recon DM)	+1
Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM)	—

ARMOUR

FRONT	15	REAR	15	SIDES	15



Weapon	Range	Damage	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits	Fire Control
Gatling Laser	4	6D+6	—	—	AP 5, Auto 4	+4

NUDAONSK HEAVY TANK DRONE

The Nudaonsk is the heaviest ground drone used by the Za'tachk military machine. Constructed to have the likeness of a huge Za'tachk, the tank is supported on four legs, making it surprisingly nimble for its size. Two heavy laser cannons slung across the drone's back provide significant firepower, while two light laser guns on turrets can damage opposing infantry considerably.

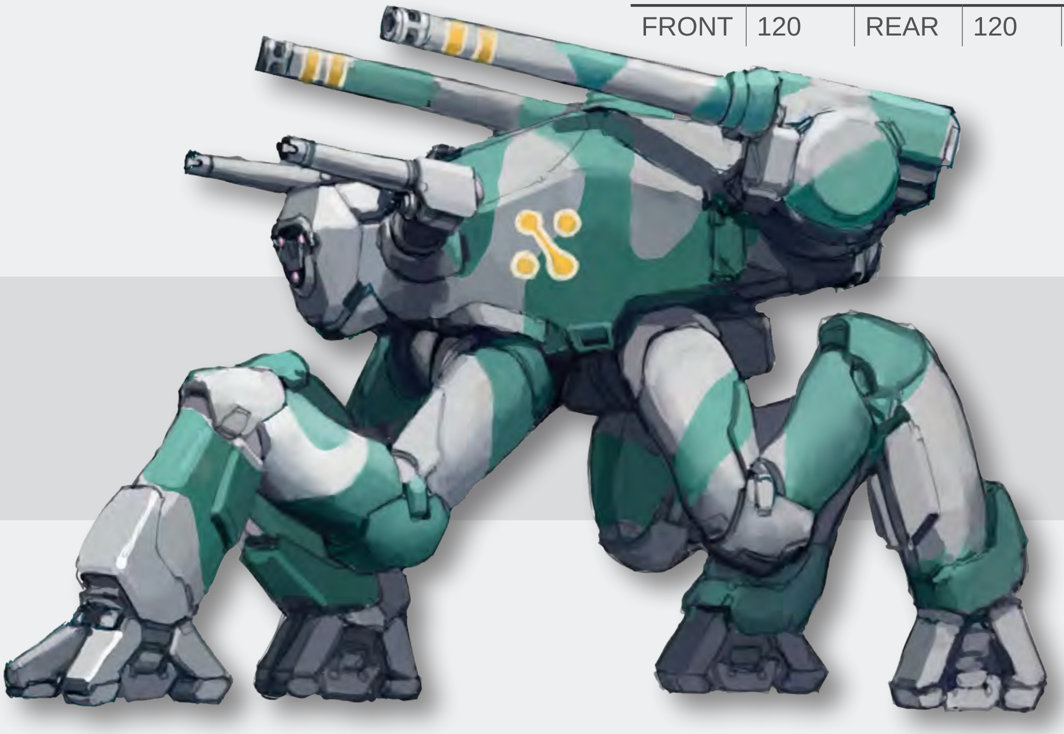
TL	14
SKILL	Electronics (remote ops)
AGILITY	+4
SPEED (CRUISE)	Medium (Slow)
RANGE (CRUISE)	450 (675)
CREW	—
PASSENGERS	—
CARGO	0.5 tons
HULL	450
SHIPPING	75
COST	MCr15.471

Traits	AFV, ATV
Equipment	Actuation System, Autopilot (advanced), Camouflage (advanced), Communications System (advanced, encrypted, meson communicator, satellite uplink), Control Interface (advanced), Control System (advanced), Decoy Dispenser, Drone, Navigation (advanced), Sensors (advanced, hardening, increased range)
Weapons	Fixed Mounts (heavy laser cannon, front, linked) x2 Large Turret (light laser cannon) x2

Equipment	
Autopilot (skill level)	+3
Communications (range)	1,000km
Navigation (Navigation DM)	+4
Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM)	+5
Camouflage (Recon DM)	-4
Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM)	—

ARMOUR

FRONT	120	REAR	120	SIDES	120



Weapon	Range	Damage	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits	Fire Control
Heavy Laser Cannon	25	2DD+2	—	—	AP 20	+4
Laser Cannon	2	8D	—	—	AP 5	+4
Laser Cannon	2	8D	—	—	AP 5	+4

ULMINIXON LIGHT AIRBORNE ATTACK DRONE

The Ulminixon light airborne attack drone is the ariel superiority vehicle of choice among Za'tachk armed forces. The vehicle is lightly armed but, in the hands of a competent operator, is manoeuvrable enough to avoid enemy fire. Armed with a gatling laser to two linked hardpoints, the Ulminixon can be equipped for many mission types. The drone is customarily deployed in threes.

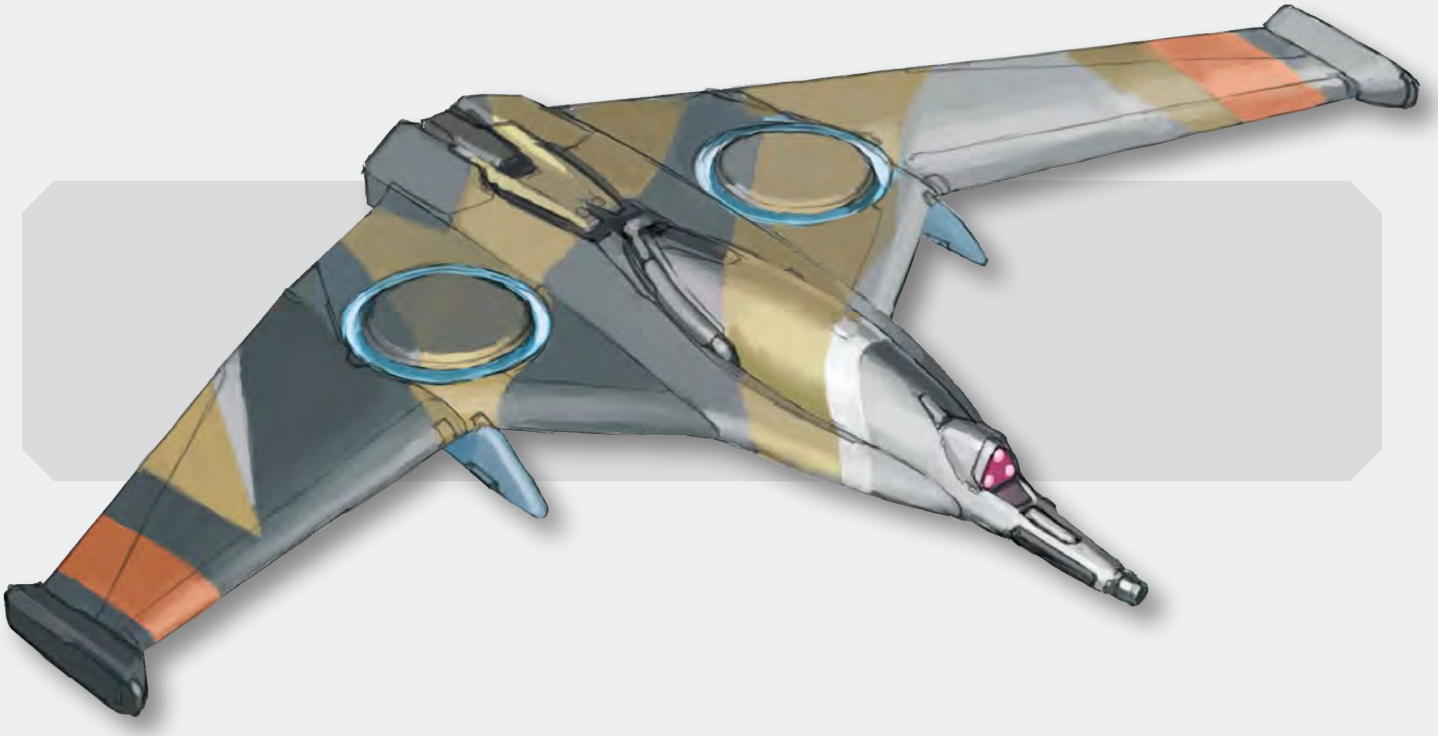
TL	14
SKILL	Electronics (remote ops)
AGILITY	+5
SPEED (CRUISE)	Very Fast (fast)
RANGE (CRUISE)	5,000 (7,500)
CREW	—
PASSENGERS	—
CARGO	0.25 tons
HULL	22
SHIPPING	5.5 tons
COST	MCr1.68

Traits	—
Equipment	Actuator Controls, Anti-Missile System (advanced laser), Autopilot (advanced), Communications System (advanced, encrypted, meson communicator, satellite uplink), Control Interface (advanced), Control System (advanced), Decoy Dispenser, Drone, Navigation System (advanced), Sensors (advanced, hardened, increased range)
Weapons	Fixed Mount (gatling laser, front) Hardpoints (2 Spaces) x2

Equipment	
Autopilot (skill level)	+3
Communications (range)	1,000km
Navigation (Navigation DM)	+4
Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM)	+2
Camouflage (Recon DM)	—
Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM)	—

ARMOUR

FRONT	10	REAR	10	SIDES	10



Weapon	Range	Damage	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits	Fire Control
Gatling Laser	4	6D	—	—	AP 5, Auto 4	+4

HIGH GUARD OF THE ZA'TACHK

The Za’tachk Alignment has a small fleet of spacecraft. Their design principles are similar to those of other species. Their spacecraft closely resemble the Hivers, although they lack the in-built versatility prevalent on Hiver craft.

Za’tachk craft are roughly cylindrical or cigar-shaped in design. An obvious design feature is the lack of sharp corners. Every surface is smoothly rounded, as sharp edges risk injuring a crewmember and corners pose a tear risk to vacc suits.

Za’tachk prefer to armour their spacecraft as heavily as possible – they feel safer knowing that a thickly armoured bulkhead protects them from the vacuum of space, not to mention other hazards such as pirates, micrometeorites, radiation and so forth.

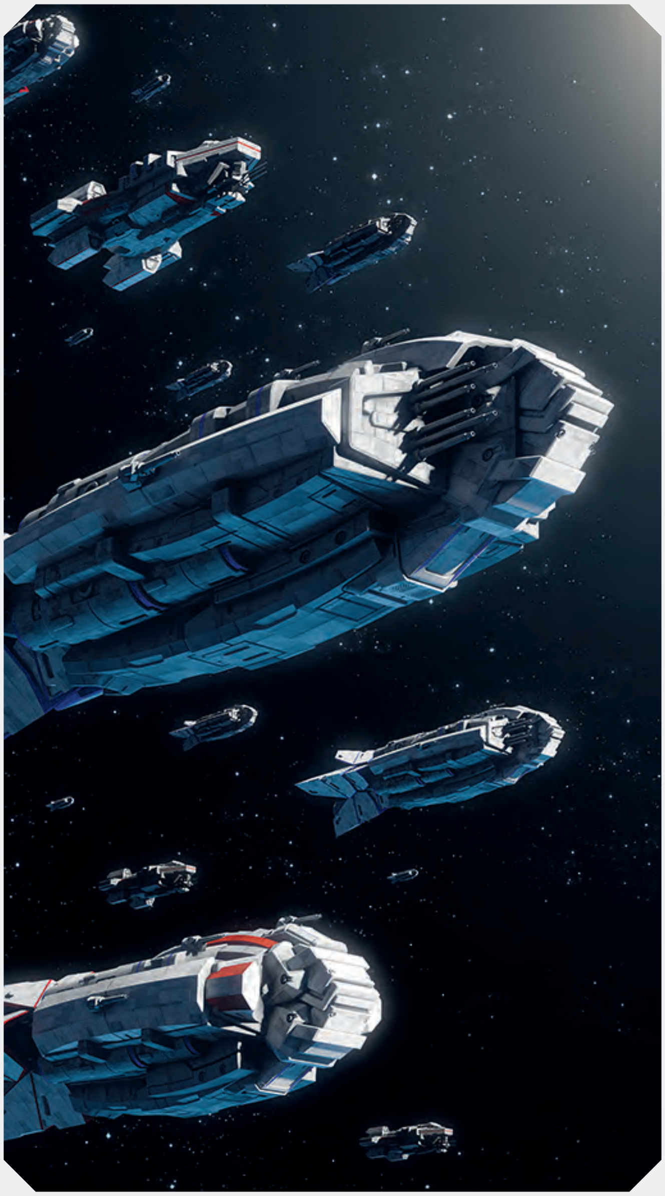
All crewed Za’tachk vessels will carry small craft or lifeboats if the main vessel needs to be abandoned. Spacecraft will carry enough small craft for the entire crew and passenger complement. To further the safety of space travel, Za’tachk vessels have redundant systems if one system breaks down. All manned vessels will have a backup manoeuvre drive, jump drive, power plant, computer and sensor systems.

The exception to heavily armoured vessels are those which do not have crew complement, such as support craft. Remote pilots control these and are primarily designed to be cheap to build and inexpensive to replace unless their primary purpose is combat.

Civilian vessels tend to be armed with lasers as a defensive measure. Paramilitary and military vessels are primarily armed with missiles and torpedoes as a first line of offence and lasers as defensive measures. If the vessel is large enough to house a spinal mount, that will be the first line of offence, followed by the standard armament of missiles, torpedoes and lasers.

Good Za’tachk naval architecture dictates the bridge is located in the centre of the vessel, where it is protected from damage by the rest of the ship. The bridge is generally surrounded by staterooms, with ship operational areas such as engineering, cargo bays and fuel located closest to the ship’s hull. Missile storage is situated as far from anything volatile as possible to reduce any risk of chain reaction detonations should there be an explosion in the munition stores.

Due to their superstition over the number three, the Za’tachk military and paramilitary will always have three commanding officers and a total crew complement divisible by three. This may lead to vessels being over-manned in some areas.



UFT LIFEBOAT

Found on all manned Za'tachk spacecraft, the *Uft* lifeboat is built on a five-ton frame and is designed as a last resort to preserve the lives of up to nine passengers and crew on distressed spacecraft. The *Uft* will automatically transmit a distress signal on all frequencies on launch unless comms are deactivated first. Enough fuel and life support is provided for three weeks. The *Uft* is also equipped with a virtual pilot, negating the need for any survivors to be skilled in piloting. Despite being designed to save lives, the *Uft* is an unpopular option for most Za'tachk due to its light armour but when faced with the certainty of death on the one hand and the possibility of life on the other, few refuse to make use of this small craft.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	5 tons, Streamlined	—	0.3
	Radiation Shielding	—	0.13
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour: 1	0.4	0.06
M-Drive	Thrust 1	0.1	0.1
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 1.5	0.1	0.1
Fuel Tanks	3 weeks of operation	0.75	—
Bridge	Cockpit	1.5	0.01
Computer	Computer/5fib	—	0.05
Sensors	Basic	—	—
Staterooms	Acceleration Benches	2	0.02
Software	Intellect	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Virtual Pilot/0	—	1
	Library	—	—
Total: MCr1.77			

Crew

None

Hull: 2

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr148/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr1.77

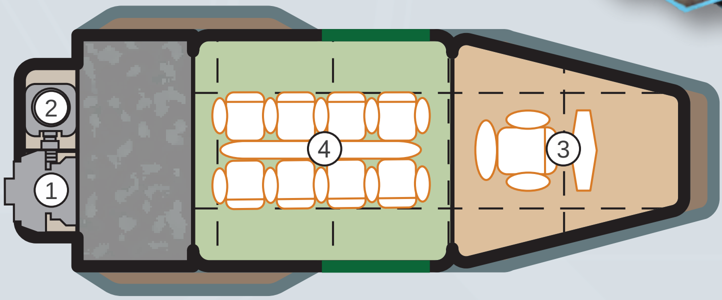
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	1
Manoeuvre Drive	0.5
Sensors	0

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Cockpit
4. Acceleration Benches



LIGHT FIGHTER DRONE

CLASS: KLARONT

The *Klaront*-class light fighter drone is a small fast vessel designed for making quick strikes deep within enemy lines or used as a defensive screen against missile ordnance for larger ships. Bearing moderate armour and armed with a single fixed-mount beam laser, the *Klaront* is designed as an expendable asset. Equipped with high thrust engines, the drone can dedicate some of its manoeuvrability to avoid incoming fire while effectively undertaking its assigned mission. If communications are cut with the operator, the fighter does not have the ability to operate independently.

TL14		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	15 tons, Streamlined	—	0.9
Armour	Bonded Superdense, Armour: 8	4	0.96
M-Drive	Thrust 7	1.2	2.4
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 30	2	2
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks of operation	1	—
Computer	Computer/20fib	—	7.5
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Fixed Mount (beam laser, high yield, intense focus)	—	0.85
Systems	Advanced Control Interface	—	0.05
	Actuation System	0.8	0.0004
Software	Anti-Hijack/1	—	6
	Evade/1	—	1
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Intellect	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Library	—	—
Cargo		3	—
Total: MCr27.9604			

Crew

None

Hull: 6

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr2330/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr27.9604

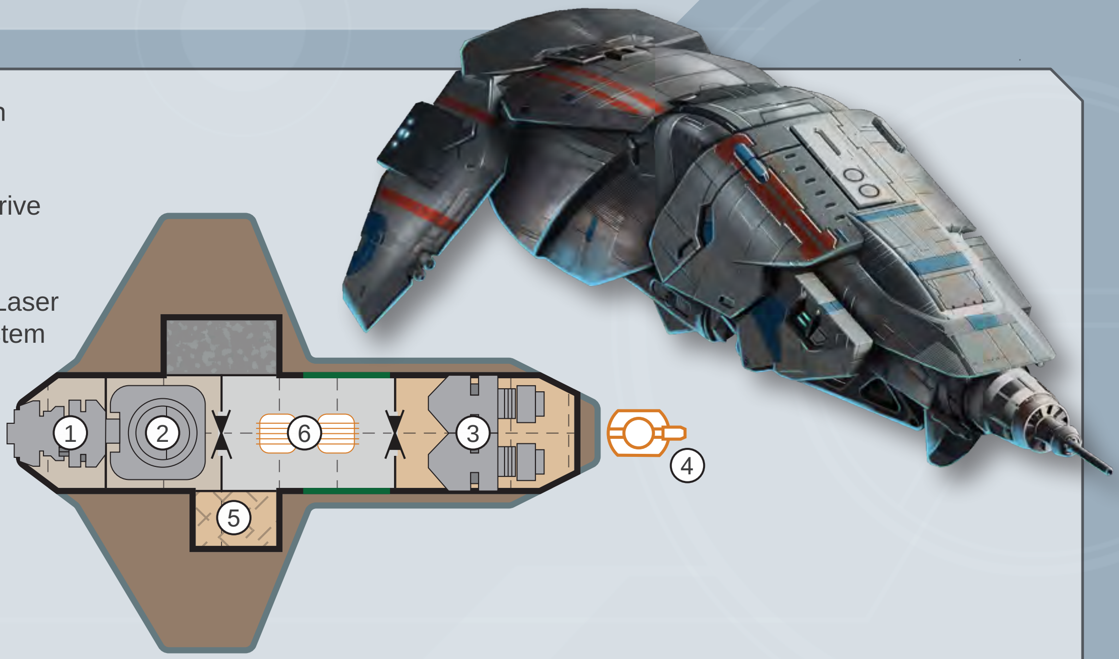
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	3
Manoeuvre Drive	12
Sensors	4
Weapons	4

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Sensors
4. Fixed Mount Laser
5. Actuation System
6. Cargo Hold



PINNACE DRONE

CLASS: AGUPON

Built on a 40-ton hull, the *Agupon* drone is used primarily to shuttle cargo from ship-to-ship or from ship to surface. Its secondary use is as a transport for delivering combat drones to a theatre of combat, be that another ship or a world's surface. Without a cockpit or robot brain, the *Agupon* requires a remote operator to control it.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	40 tons, Streamlined	—	2.4
M-Drive	Thrust 5	2	4
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 45	3	3
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks of operation	1	—
Computer	Computer/5fib	—	0.05
Sensors	Military	2	4.1
Weapons	Fixed Mounts (beam laser) x2	—	1.2
Systems	Advanced Control Interface	—	0.05
	Actuation System	2	0.008
	Fuel Scoops	—	—
Software	Anti-Hijack/1	—	6
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		30	—
Total: MCr20.808			

Crew

None

Hull: 16

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr1734/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr20.808

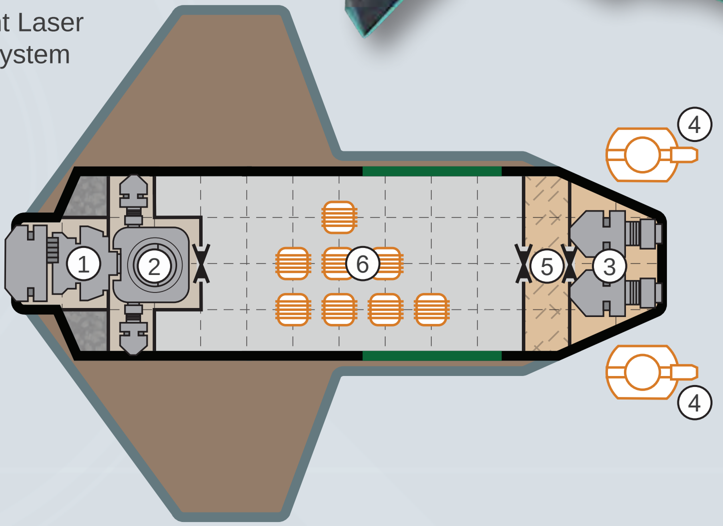
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	8
Manoeuvre Drive	20
Sensors	2
Weapons	2

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Sensors
4. Fixed Mount Laser
5. Actuation System
6. Cargo Hold



MEDIUM FIGHTER DRONE

CLASS: IESTYNIN

The *Iestynin*-class medium fighter drone is designed to provide a secondary screen of defence for larger vessels, attacking any craft or missiles which evade the first screen provided by light fighter drones. Heavily armoured and equipped with two fixed mount beam lasers, the craft is still intended as a disposable commodity for the craft they defend. With no cockpit or robot brain, the drone requires a remote operator to function and becomes useless if communications are jammed or cut.

TL14		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	50 tons, Streamlined	—	3
	Reinforced	—	1.5
Armour	Bonded Superdense, Armour: 14	10.2	5.6
M-Drive	Thrust 6	3	6
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 60	4	4
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks of operation	1	—
Computer	Computer/20fib	—	7.5
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Fixed Mounts (beam laser, high yield, intense focus) x2	1	1.5
Systems	Advanced Control System	—	0.05
	Actuation System	2.5	0.01
Software	Anti-Hijack/1	—	6
	Evade/1	—	1
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Intellect	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		25.3	—
Total: MCr42.46			

Crew

None

Hull: 22

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr3538/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr42.46

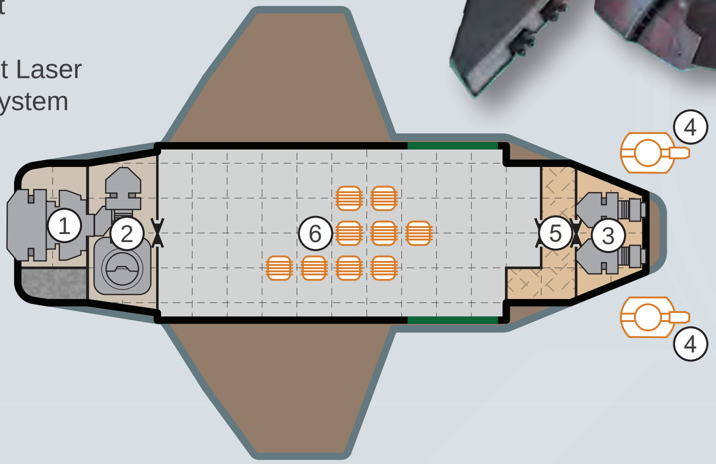
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	10
Manoeuvre Drive	30
Sensors	4
Weapons	8

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Sensors
4. Fixed Mount Laser
5. Actuation System
6. Cargo Hold



TORPEDO DRONE

CLASS: SLAIXUT

Built on a 50-ton hull, the *Slaixut* is designed as a capital ship killer. Heavily armoured and armed with a torpedo barbette, the drone typically carries nuclear ordinance to inflict as much damage as possible. The drone is never deployed independently but is normally accompanied by two medium fighters to protect it as it undertakes its mission. Without a bridge or robot brain, the drone must be controlled by a remote operator and is useless if communications are jammed or cut. Like all Za'tachk drones, the *Slaixut* is a disposable asset but due to the nature of its weaponry, most captains are reluctant to leave them behind and would rather order them destroyed than have them fall into enemy hands.

TL14		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	50 tons, Streamlined	—	3
	Reinforced Hull	—	1.5
Armour	Bonded Superdense, Armour: 10	8	4
M-Drive	Thrust 5	3.8	7.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 45	3	3
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks operation	1	—
Computer	Computer/20fib	—	7.5
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Torpedo Barbette	5	3
Ammunition	Torpedo Storage (66 torpedoes)	21.8	9.9
Systems	Advanced Control Interface	—	0.05
	Actuation System	2.5	0.01
Software	Anti-Hijack/1	—	6
	Evade/2	—	2
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Intellect	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		1.9	—
Total: MCr53.76			

Crew

None

Hull: 22

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr4480/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr53.76

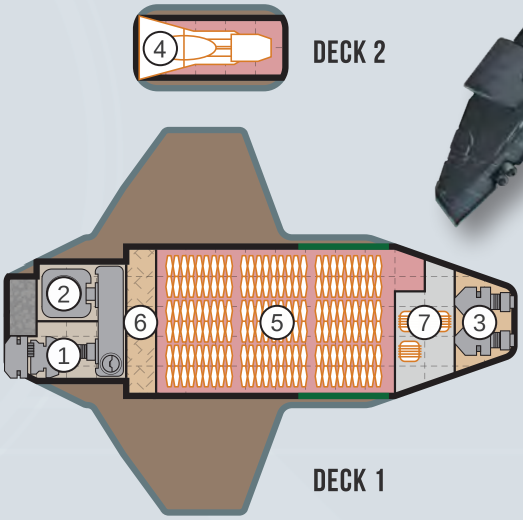
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	10
Manoeuvre Drive	25
Sensors	4
Weapons	2

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Sensors
4. Torpedo Barbette
5. Torpedo Storage
6. Actuation System
7. Cargo Hold



MERCHANT

CLASS: NOOTROOK

The *Nootrook* is a regular sight on the space lanes in and around the Za'tachk Alignment, although rarely seen beyond. Named after a heavy beast of burden from Loza'tch, the *Nootrook* is far too expensive to be operated by independent owners and is more often subsidised by larger companies. It has enough cargo space to carry a moderate load and can use jump mains to reach many isolated star clusters.

With thick armour, the merchant has a reputation as a safe, if not exactly comfortable vessel. Enough spare staterooms allow the *Nootrook* to carry passengers and cargo along its established trade routes. A modest weaponry complement of two double beam laser turrets gives the ship the ability to defend itself, although it is unlikely to find itself in a combat situation in the areas it travels.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	1,000 tons, Streamlined	—	60
	Reinforced Hull	—	90
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour: 12	150	150
	Radiation Shielding	—	25
M-Drive	Thrust 1	10	20
Backup M-Drive	Thrust 1	10	20
J-Drive	Jump 2	55	82.5
Backup J-Drive	Jump 1	30	45
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 525	35	35
Backup Power Plant	Backup Power Plant, Fusion (TL12), Power 420	28	28
Fuel Tanks	J-2, 4 weeks operation	204	—
Bridge		20	5
Computer	Computer/10fib	—	0.24
Backup Computer	Backup Computer/5fib,bis	—	0.06
Sensors	Civilian	1	3
Backup Sensors	Backup Civilian	1	3
Weapons	Double Turrets (beam lasers) x2	2	2
Craft	Docking Space (5 tons) Lifeboat	5.5 —	1.25 1.586
Systems	Cargo Crane	6	6
	Fuel Processor (200 tons/day)	10	0.5
	Fuel Scoops	—	—
	Medical Bay	1	4
Staterooms	Standard x20	80	10
Software	Intellect	—	—
	Jump Control/2	—	0.2
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		348.5	—
Total: MCr592.336			

Crew

Pilot, Astrogator, Engineers x3, Gunners x2, Administrator

Hull: 440

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr49362/month

PURCHASE COST

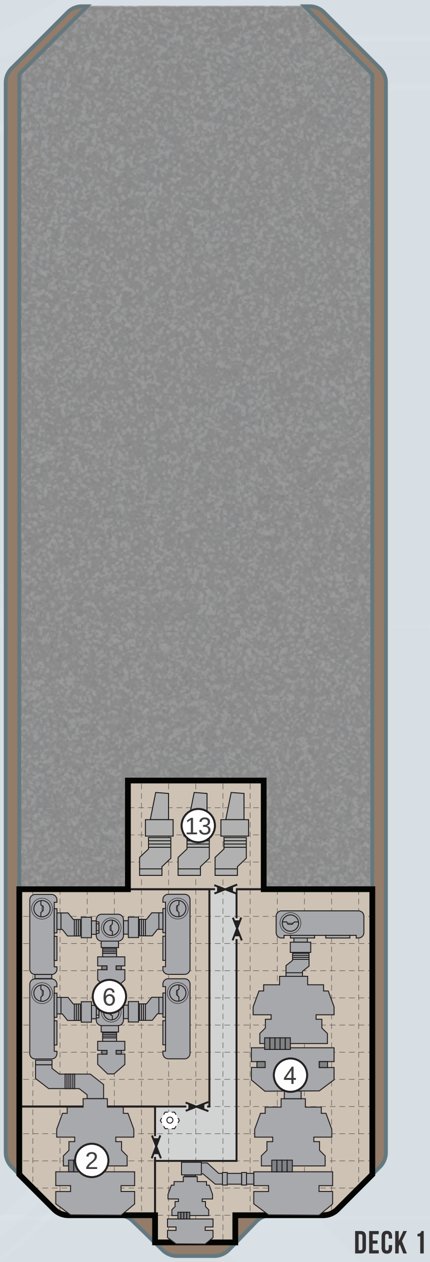
MCr592.336

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	200
Manoeuvre Drive	100
Jump Drive	200
Sensors	1
Weapons	18
Fuel Processor	10

Nootrook-class Merchant

1 square = 0.5 Ton



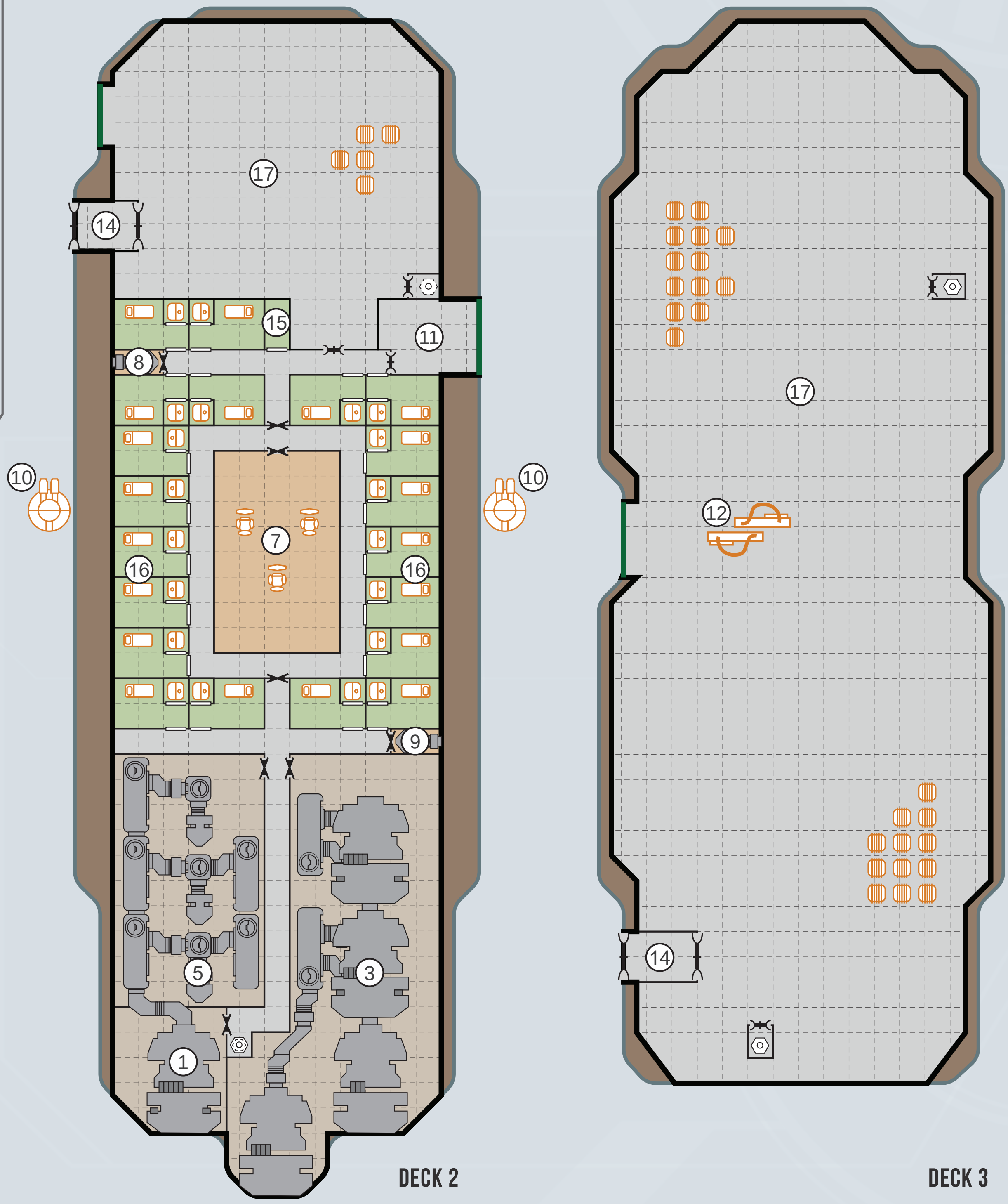
LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Backup Manoeuvre Drive
3. Jump Drive
4. Backup Jump Drive
5. Power Plant
6. Backup Power Plant
7. Bridge
8. Sensors
9. Backup Sensors
10. Double Turret
11. Docking Space
12. Cargo Crane
13. Fuel Processor
14. Airlock
15. Medical Bay
16. Staterooms
17. Cargo Hold

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Backup Manoeuvre Drive
3. Jump Drive
4. Backup Jump Drive
5. Power Plant
6. Backup Power Plant
7. Bridge
8. Sensors
9. Backup Sensors
10. Double Turret
11. Docking Space
12. Cargo Crane
13. Fuel Processor
14. Airlock
15. Medical Bay
16. Staterooms
17. Cargo Hold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DECK 3

PATROL CORVETTE

CLASS: BLODRA

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	1,000 tons, Streamlined	—	60
	Reinforced Hull	—	30
	Radiation Shielding	—	25
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour: 12	150	150
M-Drive	Thrust 5	50	100
Backup M-Drive	Thrust 1	10	20
J-Drive	Jump 2	55	82
Backup J-Drive	Jump 1	30	45
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 1,095	73	73
Backup Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 480	32	30
Fuel Tanks	J-2, 8 weeks operation	215	—
Bridge	Holographic Controls	20	6.25
Computer	Computer/30fib	—	30
Backup Computer	Computer/15fib	—	3
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
	Improved Signal Processing	1	4
Backup Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Triple Turrets (missile racks) x5	5	16.25
	Point Defence Batteries (Type III) x5	100	100
Ammunition	Missile Storage (90 missiles)	7.5	22.50
Craft	Docking Spaces (5.5 tons) x3	16.5	4.125
	UFT Lifeboat	—	5.31
	Docking Space (44 tons)	44	11
	Agupon Pinnace Drone	—	20.808
Systems	Armoury	1	0.25
	Briefing Room	4	0.5
	Fuel Processor (640 tons/day)	32	1.6
	Fuel Scoops	—	—
	Sensor Station	1	0.5
Staterooms	Standard x21	84	10.5
Software	Anti-Hijack/1	—	6
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Jump Control/2	—	0.2
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Common Areas		10	1
Cargo		47	—
Total: MCr869.393			

Crew

Captains x3, Officers x3, Pilots x4, Astrogator, Engineers x5, Maintenance x2, Gunners x10, Administrator, STOG x6, Sensops

Hull: 440

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr72449/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr869.393

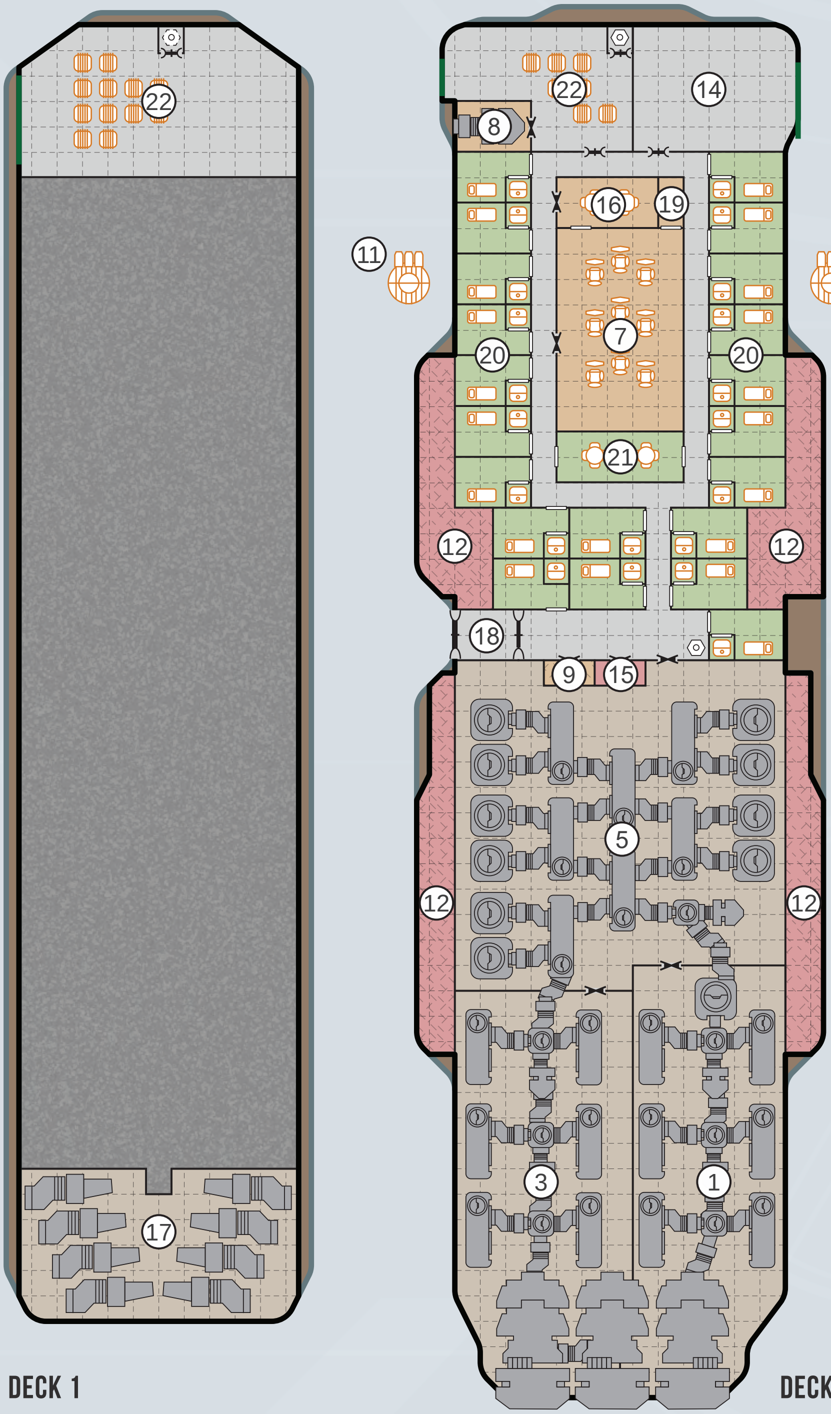
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	200
Manoeuvre Drive	300
Jump Drive	200
Sensors	5
Weapons	155
Fuel Processor	32

The *Blodra*-class patrol corvette is somewhat large for its designation by Imperial standards but it is the smallest displacement which Za'tachk will routinely crew. Built on a 1,000-ton hull, the *Blodra* is heavily armoured to protect those within. Armed with five triple missile turrets, the corvette is more than the equal of most pirates and smugglers it may face. Five Type III point defence batteries add to its ability to defend itself from incoming missiles.

The low jump drive found on board does limit the *Blodra's* range but the thrust-5 manoeuvre drive means it can get to where it is needed most quickly. When boarding other vessels, the *Blodra* will remain at a significant distance and send out a drone pinnace carrying combat drones. Both the pinnace and combat drones are remotely operated from the main craft.

1 square = 0.5 Ton



LEGEND

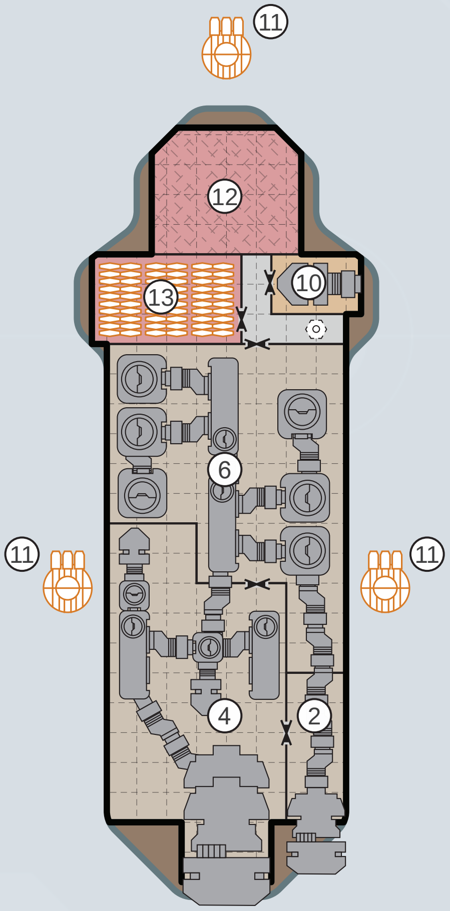
1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Backup Manoeuvre Drive
3. Jump Drive
4. Backup Jump Drive
5. Power Plant
6. Backup Power Plant
7. Bridge
8. Sensors
9. Improved Signal Processing
10. Backup Sensors
11. Triple Turret
12. Point Defence Battery
13. Missile Storage
14. Docking Space
15. Armoury
16. Briefing Room
17. Fuel Processor
18. Airlock
19. Sensor Station
20. Staterooms
21. Common Area
22. Cargo Hold

Blodra-class Patrol Corvette

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Backup Manoeuvre Drive
3. Jump Drive
4. Backup Jump Drive
5. Power Plant
6. Backup Power Plant
7. Bridge
8. Sensors
9. Improved Signal Processing
10. Backup Sensors
11. Triple Turret
12. Point Defence Battery
13. Missile Storage
14. Docking Space
15. Armoury
16. Briefing Room
17. Fuel Processor
18. Airlock
19. Sensor Station
20. Staterooms
21. Common Area
22. Cargo Hold



DECK 3

DESTROYER

CLASS: BLARWRIR

The *Blarwrir*-class destroyer is among the largest ships fielded by the Za'tachk Alignment. If greater firepower is required, the Alignment will call on the might of the Hive Federation Navy for support. Built on a 5,000-ton frame, the *Blarwrir* is a streamlined vessel, enabling it to land and operate within an atmosphere. Armed with two medium torpedo bays and eight small missile bays, the class presents a formidable entry into the field. Ten high-yield and accurate triple laser turrets act as a second line of offence and support the point defence batteries. The destroyer has a good reputation amongst those who serve upon it as a safe and comfortable vessel.

TL14		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	5,000 tons, Streamlined	—	300
	Reinforced Hull	—	150
	Radiation Shielding	—	125
Armour	Bonded Superdense, Armour: 14	560	560
M-Drive	Thrust 5	200	400
Backup M-Drive	Thrust 1	50	100
J-Drive	Jump 3	380	570
Backup J-Drive	Jump 1	130	195
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 5,610	374	374
Backup Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 2,445	163	163
Fuel Tanks	J-3, 8 weeks operation	1,573.8	—
Bridge	Holographic Controls	60	31.25
Computer	Core/60fib	—	112.5
Backup Computer	Computer/30fib	—	30
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
	Improved Signal Processing	1	4
	Sensor Stations x8	8	4
Backup Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Medium Torpedo Bays x2	200	12
	Small Missile Bays x8	400	96
	Triple Turrets (beam lasers, high yield, intense focus) x10	10	32
	Point Defence Batteries (Type III) x10	200	200
Ammunition	Missile Storage (80 missiles)	6.6	20
	Torpedo Storage (60 torpedoes)	19.8	9
Craft	Docking Spaces (5.5 tons) x13	71.5	17.875
	Lifeboats x13	—	23.01
	Docking Space (44 tons)	44	11
	Agupon Pinnace Drone	—	20.808
Systems	Armoury	2	0.5
	Briefing Room	4	0.5
	Fuel Processor (1,580 tons/day)	79	3.95

Crew

Captains x3, Officers x11, Pilots x6, Astrogator, Engineers x29, Maintenance x10, Gunners x32, Administrators x5, STOG x12, Sensops x8

Hull: 2,200

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr328691/month

PURCHASE COST

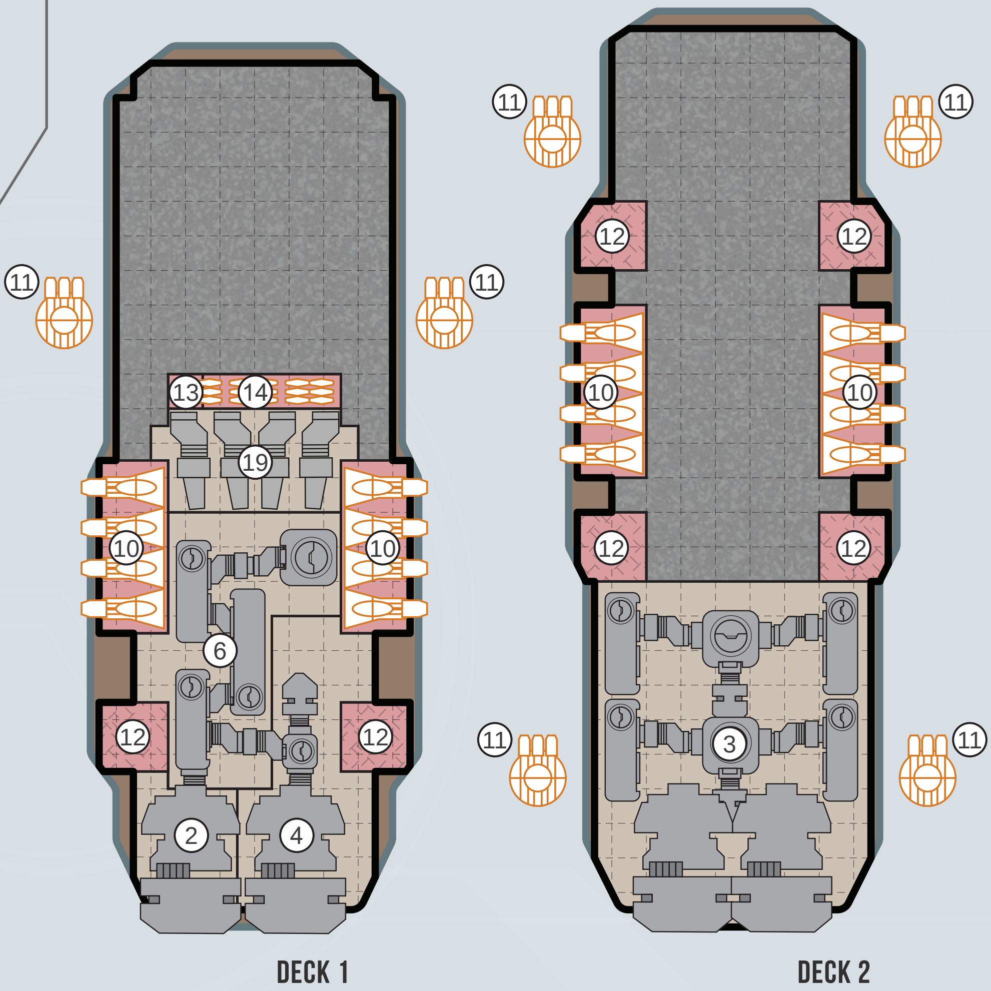
MCr3944.293

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	1,000
Manoeuvre Drive	2,500
Jump Drive	1,500
Sensors	5
Weapons	520
Fuel Processor	79

TL14		Tons	Cost (MCr)
	Medical Bay	4	2
	Fuel Scoops	—	—
Staterooms	Standard x66	264	330
Software	Anti-Hijack/1	—	6
	Electronic Warfare/1	—	15
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Jump Control/3	—	0.3
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Point Defence/2	—	12
Common Areas		30	3
Cargo		159	—
Total: MCr3944.323			

1 square = 5 Tons



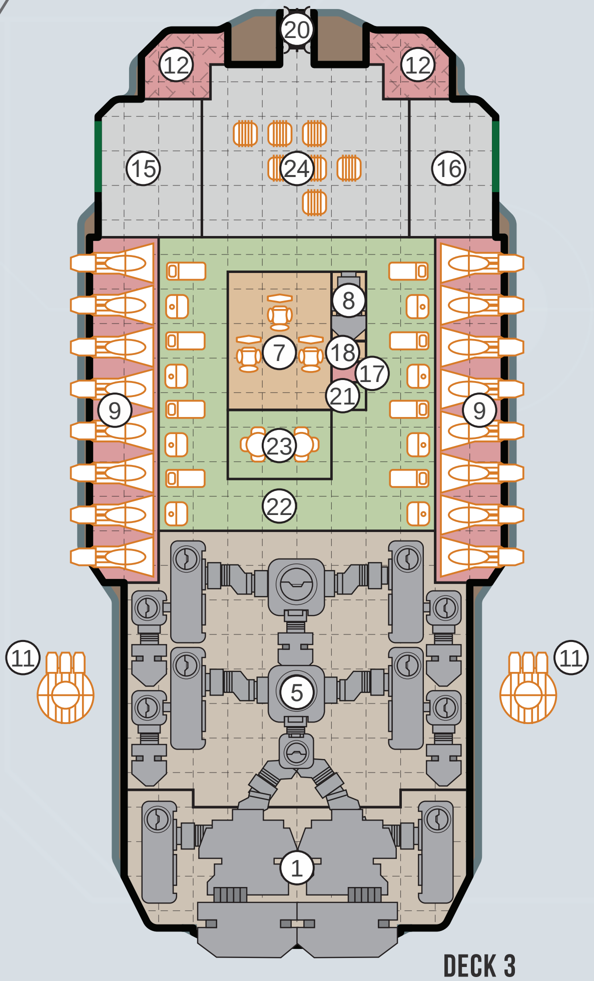
LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Backup Manoeuvre Drive
3. Jump Drive
4. Backup Jump Drive
5. Power Plant
6. Backup Power Plant
7. Bridge
8. Sensors, Sensor Stations
9. Medium Torpedo Bays
10. Small Missile Bays
11. Triple Turret
12. Point Defence Battery
13. Missile Storage
14. Torpedo Storage
15. Docking Spaces (Lifeboats)
16. Docking Space (Pinnace Drone)
17. Armoury
18. Briefing Room
19. Fuel Processor
20. Medical Bay
21. Staterooms
22. Common Area
23. Cargo Hold

Blarwrir-class Destroyer

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Backup Manoeuvre Drive
3. Jump Drive
4. Backup Jump Drive
5. Power Plant
6. Backup Power Plant
7. Bridge
8. Sensors, Sensor Stations
9. Medium Torpedo Bays
10. Small Missile Bays
11. Triple Turret
12. Point Defence Battery
13. Missile Storage
14. Torpedo Storage
15. Docking Spaces (Lifeboats)
16. Docking Space (Pinnace Drone)
17. Armoury
18. Briefing Room
19. Fuel Processor
20. Airlock
21. Medical Bay
22. Staterooms
23. Common Area
24. Cargo Hold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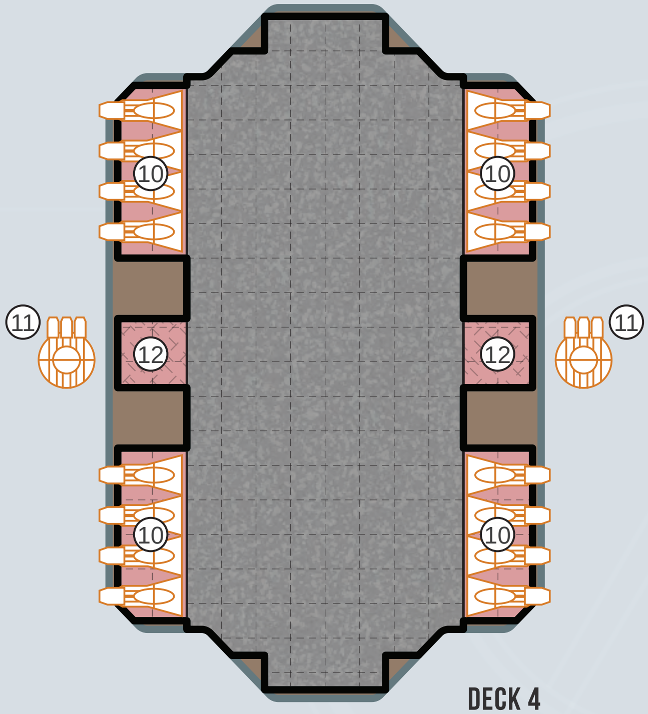
DECK 3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DECK 4

1 square = 5 Tons

CARRIER

CLASS: LOZA'TCH

Built on a 10,000-ton hull, the *Loza'tch*-class carriers are the largest vessels in the Alignment fleet. Only five of these large vessels are currently in active service, each named after one of the planets in the Za'tachk Alignment. The *Loza'tch* is never fielded independently; three *Blarwrir* destroyers typically accompany it to provide protection. While an impressive vessel, the carrier is a little slow but its jump drive can keep up with other ships in the fleet when travelling from system-to-system. With the ability to field 31 fighting drones, the *Loza'tch* has enough resources to provide its own protection and initiate a credible threat towards enemy vessels. Despite its abilities, it is not well-liked by crews, who find the vessel's tight quarters and lack of armour a concern.

TL14		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	10,000 tons, Streamlined	—	600
	Reinforced Hull	—	300
	Radiation Shielding	—	250
Armour	Bonded Superdense, Armour: 10	800	800
M-Drive	Thrust 4	400	800
Backup M-Drive	Thrust 1	100	200
J-Drive	J-3	755	1132
Backup J-Drive	J1	255	382
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 9,555	661	661
Backup Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 4,560	304	304
Fuel Tanks	J-4, 8 weeks operation	3,127.7	—
Bridge	Normal bridge	60	60
	Command Bridge	80	65
	Holographic Controls	—	31.25
Computer	Core/70fib	—	120
Backup Computer	Computer/30fib	—	30
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
	Improved Signal Processing	1	4
Backup Sensors	Improved	34.3	—
Weapons	Triple Turrets (beam lasers, high yield, intense focus) x10	10	32.5
	Point Defence Batteries (Type III) x20	400	400
Craft	Docking Spaces (55 tons) x9	495	112.5
	Iestynin Medium Fighter Drones x9	—	382.14
	Docking Spaces (5.5 tons) x21	115.5	26.25
	Lifeboats x21	—	37.17
	Docking Spaces (16.5 tons) x21	346.5	78.75
	Klaront Fighter Drones x21	—	587.1684
	Docking Spaces (55 tons) x3	165	37.5

Crew

Captain x3, Officers x18, Pilots x33, Astrogator, Engineer x52, Maintenance x20, Medic, Gunners x22, Administration x10, STOG x21, Sensor Operators x8

Hull: 4,400

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr648285/month

PURCHASE COST

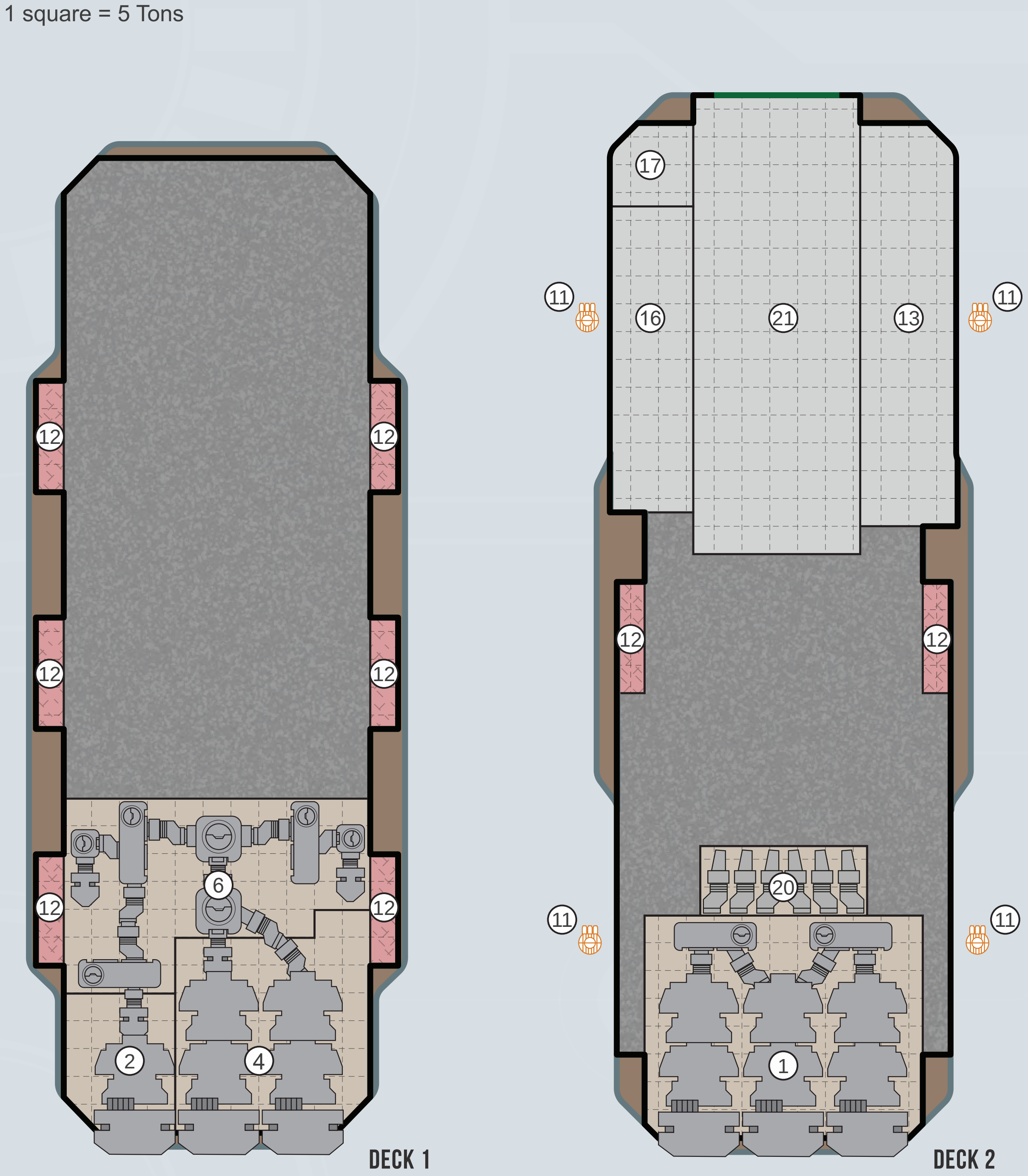
MCr7779.4164

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	2,000
Manoeuvre Drive	4,000
Jump Drive	3,000
Sensors	5
Weapons	730
Fuel Processor	75

TL14		Tons	Cost (MCr)
	Slaixut Torpedo Drones x3	—	161.28
	Docking Space (40 tons)	44	10
	Agupon Pinnace Drone	—	20.808
Systems	Armoury	5	1.25
	Briefing Room	8	1
	Fuel Processor (1,500 tons/day)	75	3.75
	Launch Tube x2	1,000	52
	Sensor Stations x8	8	4
	Fuel Scoops	—	—
Staterooms	Standard x104	416	51.5
Software	Anti-Hijack/1	—	6
	Battle System/2	—	8
	Electronic Warfare/2	—	18
	Evade/2	—	2
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Intellect	—	—
	Jump Control/3	—	0.3
	Library/0	—	—
	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
Cargo		331	
Total: MCr7779.4164			

Loza'tch-class Carrier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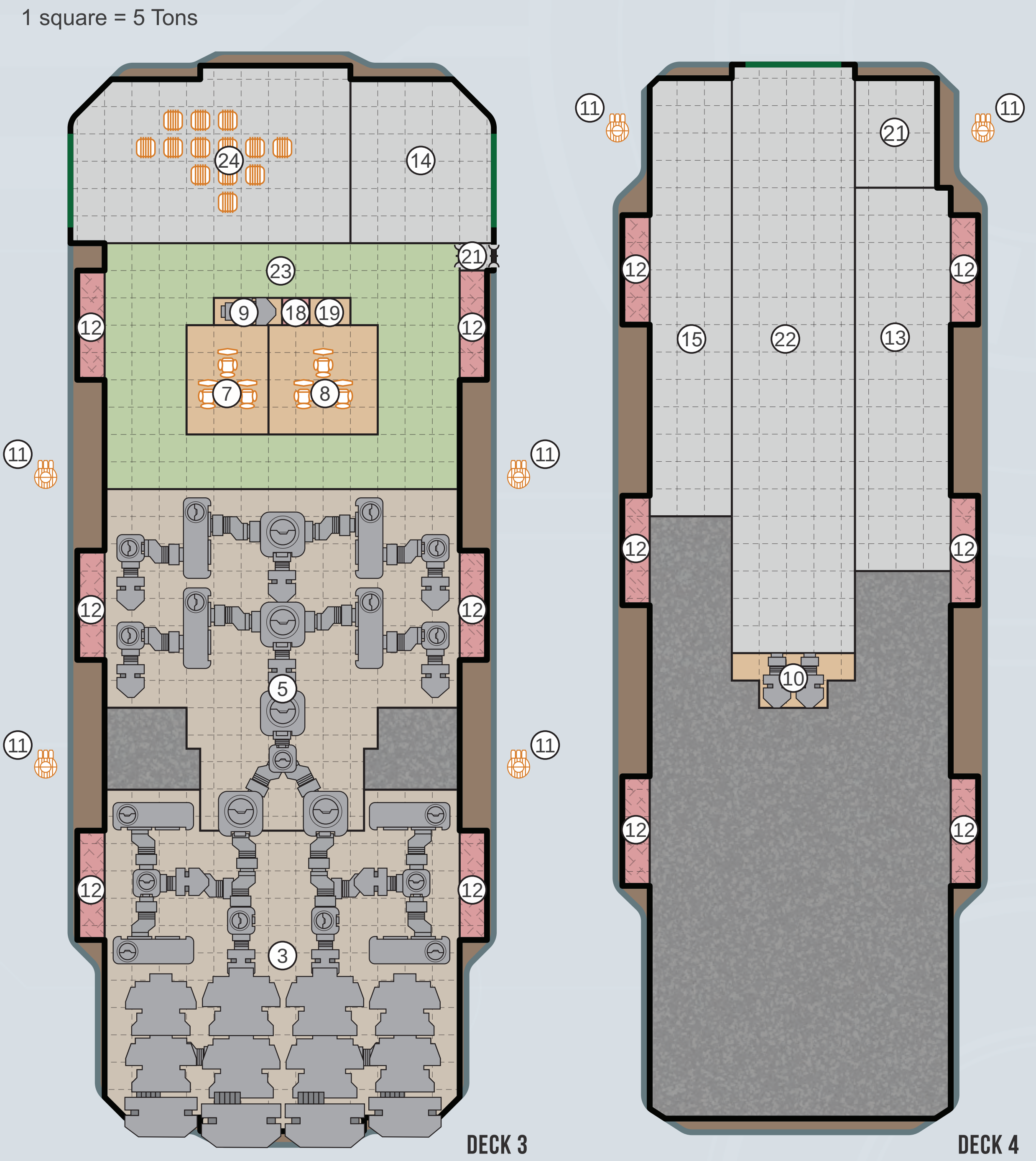
DECK 1
DECK 2

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Backup Manoeuvre Drive
3. Jump Drive
4. Backup Jump Drive
5. Power Plant
6. Backup Power Plant
7. Bridge
8. Command Bridge
9. Sensors, Sensor Stations
10. Backup Sensors
11. Triple Turret
12. Point Defence Battery
13. Docking Spaces (Iestynin Drones)
14. Docking Spaces (Lifeboats)
15. Docking Spaces (Klaront Drones)
16. Docking Spaces (Slaixut Drones)
17. Docking Space (Pinnace Drone)
18. Armoury
19. Briefing Room
20. Fuel Processor
21. Launch Tube
22. Staterooms
23. Cargo Hold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DECK 4

LEGEND

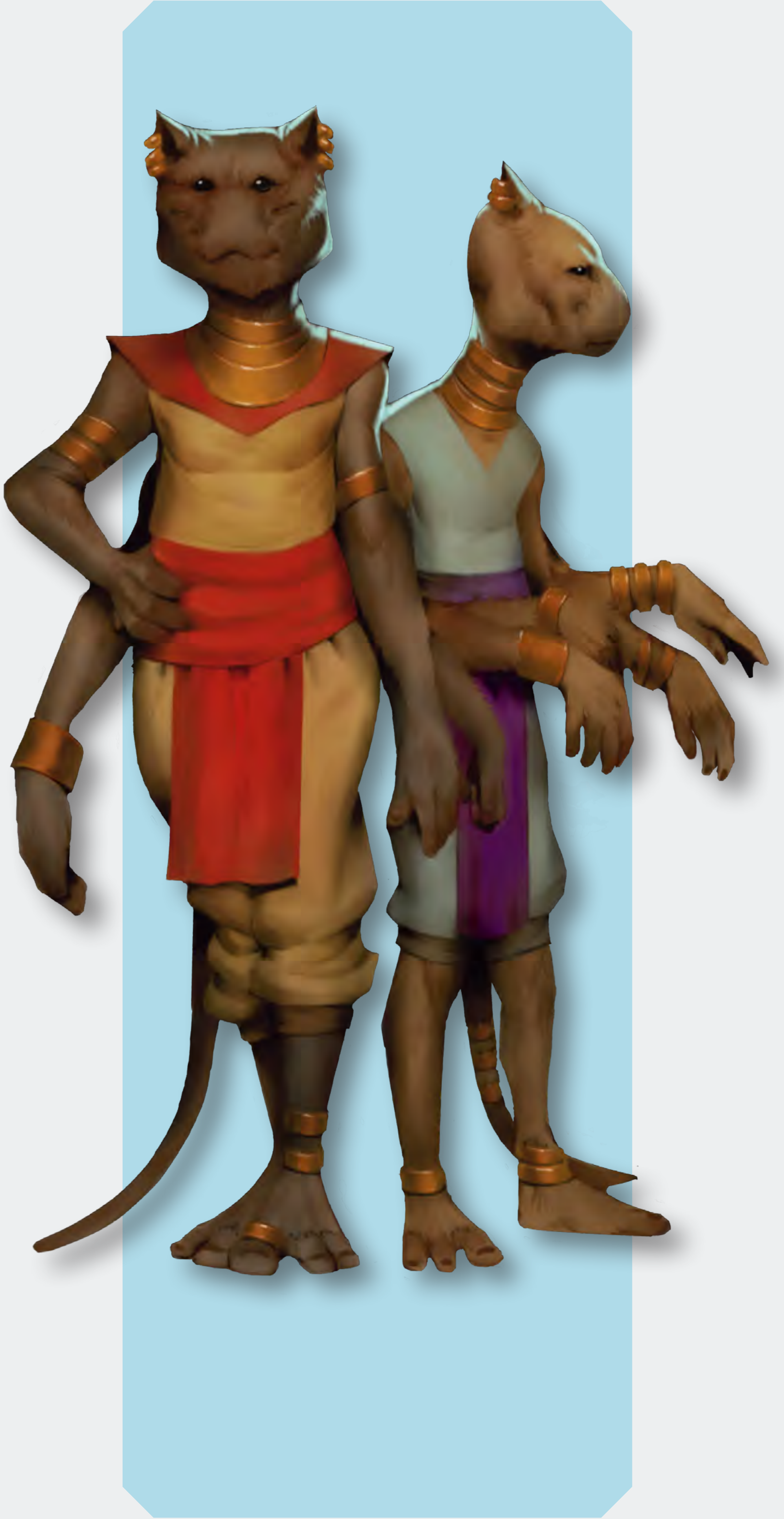
1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Backup Manoeuvre Drive
3. Jump Drive
4. Backup Jump Drive
5. Power Plant
6. Backup Power Plant
7. Bridge
8. Command Bridge
9. Sensors, Sensor Stations
10. Backup Sensors
11. Triple Turret
12. Point Defence Battery
13. Docking Spaces (Iestynin Drones)
14. Docking Spaces (Lifeboats)
15. Docking Spaces (Klaront Drones)
16. Docking Spaces (Slaixut Drones)
17. Docking Space (Pinnace Drone)
18. Armoury
19. Briefing Room
20. Fuel Processor
21. Airlock
22. Launch Tube
23. Staterooms
24. Cargo Hold

THE GURVIN

The Gurvin, *Gurvinosapien Ofilaqis*, were the second intelligent species of interest discovered by the Hivers. When first detected, the Gurvin were a primitive species with a TL1 society. They are a peaceful, social, highly individualistic species with an inordinately materialistic outlook.

The Hivers practised their manipulations on the Gurvin and slowly introduced them to new technologies that artificially advanced their society to a spacefaring capability. In the process, the Hivers suppressed the Gurvins' more aggressive tendencies while encouraging their materialistic urges.

The Gurvin soon proved a valuable addition to the neophyte Hive Federation, bringing talents the Hivers put to good use with them. Taking their place as the Federation's primary merchants, economists and bankers, they perform most of the routine buying and selling in the Federation and almost all of the foreign trade.



PHYSIOLOGY

Gurvin are a strikingly attractive, tailed, hexapod species which superficially resemble Terran otters and minks, especially in the appearance of their triangular heads. However, they are not aquatic. Their long, almost spindly limbs break the outward mustelid resemblance. Their sturdy bodies are compact and are covered with short glossy fur except for the palms of the hands, feet and digit pads. Fur commonly ranges from blonde to caramel, cinnamon, chocolate and auburn. Multi-coloured or patterned fur is generally unheard of except as a Gurvin ages. When an adult Gurvin reaches approximately 45, the fur around the eyes, muzzle and chest turns grey. The grey fur spreads across the rest of the body in the ensuing years, leaving venerable Gurvin a solid grey.

Gurvin are endothermic with a closed circulatory system. Their blood is based on a copper ion, turning blue when exposed to oxygen. They inspire oxygen and expire carbon dioxide.

Gurvin possess two legs, two arms and an intermediary pair of limbs which can function equally well as either arms or legs. The limbs possess two joints, each corresponding to knees, ankles, elbows and wrists. The four upper limbs end in dexterous hands with three digits and an opposable thumb on both the left and right side of the palm. The legs end in somewhat larger feet with only three toes. Both fingers and toes end in blunt claws.

Gurvin can adopt a bipedal or quadrupedal stance as circumstances dictate. They prefer to run using their intermediary limbs and legs, giving them a bounding gait which further likens them to otters and minks. When stationary, Gurvin squat on their haunches and use all four hands for manipulation.

Gurvin possess a tail which comprises approximately a third of their body length. The tail is neither prehensile nor capable of much movement. Its primary function is to assist in balance, dragging on the floor behind the Gurvin, useless as a weapon.

Skeletal tissue is composed of calcium carbonate in a protein matrix. The skeletal structure contains an extremely flexible spine supporting a ribcage, two complex shoulder girdles and a pelvic structure. The ribcage is reinforced with horizontal cartilaginous bracing, providing extra protection to internal organs while not restricting flexibility.

The skull is connected to the spine with a highly mobile ball and socket joint, allowing them to turn their heads 180 degrees to see directly behind themselves. This flexibility makes the joint somewhat unstable and Gurvin can suffer from an extremely painful dislocated skull.

Internally, Gurvin possess two hearts – the primary located in the upper chest cavity between the upper arms and a secondary heart in the lower. Freshly oxygenated blood is pumped around the body by the primary heart and blood depleted of oxygen is pumped to the lungs by the secondary heart.

Breathing is only performed through a small slit on each cheek under the eyes. Nasal cavities lead to a trachea wholly separated from the oesophagus and into a single lung on the left side of the body, which extends down through both ribcages. This physiology makes it impossible for Gurvin to choke on a swallowed item but equally so for them to breathe through their mouths.

Gurvin do not possess a stomach. Instead, food is delivered from an oesophagus analogue directly into an intestinal structure which acts as a combined small and large intestine. Organs that perform similar functions to kidneys, liver and appendix are attached directly to the intestine, remove waste products and deliver them to an organ near the tail's base. A single vent at the tip of the tail is used to eliminate waste.

Gurvin senses are analogous to that of Humaniti. Their hearing is tuned to slightly higher frequencies than humans, while their sense of smell is noticeably sharper compared to humans. Gurvin sight is adapted to the brighter light projected by the F9 V star of their home system, allowing them to tolerate brighter light than humans but with somewhat less visual acuity in the dark.

Gurvin do not possess olfactory senses in their nose. Instead, the olfactory nerve is located in an organ in the pallet of the mouth. To smell, Gurvin use their tongue to sample the air and then slide it across their olfactory nerve. This gives the impression of the Gurvin frequently licking their lips.

Female Gurvin produce a milk-analogue rich in proteins and fats in a bladder connected to the upper small intestine. The milk-analogue is regurgitated directly into the mouth of their young. When the young are hungry, they raise their heads and open their mouths to display the vivid purple skin inside their mouth and tongue. The display is accompanied by incessant high-pitched squeaking. This behaviour induces milk-analogue production in the mother. As the young mature and need to rely less on the milk analogue provided by the mother, the vivid colouration in the mouth diminishes to a dark mauve.

Gurvin evolved on Ofilaq (Folgore sector 0305) in orbit around a blue-white main sequence star which radiates significant amounts of UV radiation. To protect themselves from UV damage, Gurvin produce oil from glands in the pits of their arms and intermediary limbs. The oil contains oxybenzone and octinoxate, which absorbs UV radiation harmlessly. The oil is spread across the fur through grooming with either the hands or a grooming tool. The oil has the secondary benefit of giving Gurvin fur its striking sheen.

Gurvin possess two sexes and are a sexually dimorphic species. Females are approximately 1.75 metres long from muzzle to tail and weigh around 90 kilograms. Males are somewhat shorter at 1.55 metres-, have a lighter build and commonly weigh no more than 70 kilograms. In addition to being shorter and slighter than females, male Gurvin are only approximately half as intelligent. Although sentient, males are decidedly lacking in creativity and reasoning ability.

Male Gurvin have bony processes on the outside of the forearms of both pairs of upper limbs, which seasonally grow and shed into wicked blades in the style of antlers. In the past, the antlers were used to fight other males to impress females with their suitability as a strong mate. Modern Gurvin no longer perform this ritual and the antlers have become little more than an item of adornment. In a typical display of Hiver squeamishness when it comes to violence, male Gurvin are required to trim their arm antlers to the nub when away from Gurvin worlds.

Gurvin only mate to reproduce. A female Gurvin comes into heat once every Ofilaq year. During this period, she gives off pheromones which indicate she is ready to reproduce. Once female Gurvin produce young, they do not come into heat again until the young are weaned.

The reproduction organs of Gurvin are completely internal in both sexes. The genital opening is located between the legs, a sphincter-like structure hidden from view by fur. Mating is performed by pressing the two openings together in a ‘kiss’.

LIFESPAN

Gurvin have a gestation period lasting approximately 11 months, resulting in the birth of two to four young. Gurvin can give birth without any outside assistance, except for medical complications.

Births are generally balanced between male and female offspring. Gurvin young are born remarkably undeveloped and helpless despite their long gestational period. They are furless and their eyes and ears are sealed closed. They require intensive care during the first three months of their life, needing almost constant attention from their mother. In the past, male Gurvin routinely killed young they had not sired to force the female into eustress. While such infanticide no longer occurs, mothers remain aggressively protective of their young and will not allow any adult male near the young at this stage.

Mothers remain with their young until they are three months of age and their eyes and ears open. The bodies of the young are now covered in light fuzz, which continues to grow into a full coat of fur over the next nine months. The young can crawl about and move on their own. They also start speaking their first words.

At six months, mothers will take their young to meet the rest of the family and the adult males become involved in childrearing duties. At this point in their development, young Gurvin begin to walk upright and string simple sentences together. They can eat on their own from pre-masticated food provided by their parents. This process will continue until the young are a year old and their teeth have grown, at which point they can chew their food. It is not unusual for mothers to continue masticating their young’s food for another year.

Gurvin young remain in the care of their parents until they reach the age of 16, when they are sexually mature but are not yet considered adults. There is no social pressure for the sexually mature Gurvin to leave the family unit. It is not unusual for Gurvin to be with their family unit until they form their own family units.

Gurvin are in their prime from the age of 16 to 45. Females have an average lifespan of approximately 90 standard years, assuming they have access to modern medicines. Average male life expectancy is shorter at 65 standard years. Just like many other species, anagathics can significantly lengthen this lifespan.

DIET

Gurvin are omnivores and enjoy a range of foods, although they slightly prefer animal proteins over plant-based foods. Females who have unweaned young develop a craving for a diet favouring animal proteins over plant-based matter due to the nutritional demands of producing a milk-analogue.

Meals are often prepared communally to be enjoyed by the entire family unit. Meal preparation includes cooking the raw ingredients via various methods, including frying, baking, searing and stewing. Gurvin taste buds are highly refined and rarely use sauces or additional seasonings on their food, finding such additions distract them from the natural flavours of their food.

Gurvin have a strong sweet tooth. It is not unusual for meals to be accompanied by at least one sweet dish. Interestingly, Gurvin have a reduced capacity to taste sweet flavours, so most desserts they eat tend to be sickeningly sweet for many other species.

Gurvin can consume Terran food without any problems and vice versa. Gurvin have gained quite a taste for some Terran foods. Octopus, frogs, shellfish and grasshoppers are rare delicacies among Gurvin. Ice cream and custard are highly favoured by them and always fetch a high price in trade.

PSYCHOLOGY

When the Gurvin were first discovered by the Hivers, they were somewhat aggressive. This manifested primarily in territory acquisition. If another group of Gurvin happened to possess the desired territory, males would fight for its ownership.

The Hivers found this aggression a highly immature and undesirable trait they could foresee becoming problematic as the Gurvin developed and ultimately spread into space. In typical Hiver fashion, they set about manipulating female Gurvin to channel their aggression into a more desirable and helpful avenue for the Hivers.

This came in the form of channelling Gurvin predilection for gathering territory into one of economic pursuits, particularly a desire to generate money. The manipulation was subtle, and expected to last a significant period before complete, but time has never prevented the Hivers from undertaking a manipulation.

Modern female Gurvin have a great love, some would say obsession, with the generation of money. They are stereotypically money-oriented and have a fixation on solid cash. Wealth is a primary motivating force for them and nothing gives them more pleasure than generating a good profit. Female Gurvin merchants work in the Federation's mercantile concerns and often serve as brokers, pursers and quartermasters under Hiver officers on Federation vessels. Family-operated free traders ply the trade lanes within the Federation and almost all foreign trade is undertaken by Gurvin. If supply needs matching to demand there is a Gurvin who will arrange it, but she will demand money for doing so and typically lots of it.

The acquisition of wealth also extends to material possessions, leading female Gurvin self-worth to be based on what she owns. Female Gurvin openly display their wealth in a gaudy fashion some other species find particularly vulgar.

This desire for wealth and material possessions leads to Gurvin refusing to do anything altruistically. They believe everything has a price to be met before goods or services are traded. This extends into all aspects of Gurvin life. Even the production of a family is seen as a means to enhance future wealth accumulation, with offspring eventually bringing more money into the family before starting a family of their own.

Female Gurvin possess an adventurous streak which is not present in males, particularly in obtaining greater wealth. Gurvin traders have an uncanny ability to show up at a market, whether a trading post on a Federation world or a starport on the Solomani trailing frontier, with just the right cargo in current short supply and high demand, extracting every advantage from it. Gurvin negotiation is called ‘ninja math’, because there are always invisible factors sneaking around in the calculations that do not leap out until it is too late to back out of the deal. It is worth noting the Ninja numbers always favour the Gurvin.

While female Gurvin have had their aggressive tendencies redirected to the accumulation of wealth, there was little need to curb the demand for aggression in the males. They act as the females direct. When left to their own devices, males acted largely on an instinctive level, that being the primary hunter and protector of the family.

SOCIETY

Taking the female Gurvin view of wealth and possession into account, it is no surprise that Gurvin society is centred around the concept of turning a profit. They possess a convoluted set of rules that govern their business ventures and impact their daily lives. Almost all interactions involve money transfer and bribery is a normal part of everyday interactions.

MATRIARCHY

Females dominate Gurvin society. Their culture is highly philogynist and matriarchal. They sit in every position of power. They run the government, businesses, corporations and households. As such, Gurvin cultural norms reflect and deeply institutionalise philogyny and discrimination.

Family lineage is viewed from the female line. Gurvin believe a child can always tell who their mother is but their father could be anyone. Inheritance is also distributed through female descendants, with males rarely receiving anything.

Gurvin males are barred from most aspects of society, except operating as devoted servants in the industrial, agriculture and entertainment fields. They are not permitted to vote; they have very little part in state affairs, except for appearing as 'geisha boy' consorts at the side of female leaders.

Males are thought of as inferior to females in almost every way. They are unable to function adequately without female supervision. They are prone to bicker and indulge in domination asserting aggressive displays when left to their own devices. While males are not seen as chattel, they are most certainly seen as being the responsibility of their female. It is not legal for males to be sold, as such, but it is expected for a female to offer a suitable dowry to the family of a male she intends to marry.

Males are not permitted to own possessions. Everything they have is provided for them by their female. They are never trusted with handling money or any financial matters, as they do not have the intellectual capacity to undertake such functions shrewdly.

Psychologically and intellectually, male Gurvin are not equal to females. While this may be distasteful for other species, for Gurvin it is a simple matter of biology. Males cannot be expected, nor are they permitted, to operate independently and, therefore, must be supervised by females. In some ways, Male Gurvin are treated by females as favoured pets and in other ways as domesticated working animals.

FAMILY

Gurvin families typically consist of a matriarch, her husband or husbands, and their children below the age of adulthood. Gurvin indulge in polyandry, with females having several husbands. Regardless of who the father of any young is, the children are all treated as the offspring of all the husbands in the family group.

Husbands are not equal to their wife in the family. There is no formal ranking system among the husbands in a family group, although they will vie among themselves for the favour of their wife. They do not make any decisions or routinely have any input in the decision-making process.

Children born to the family are essentially helpless for the first year of their lives and traditionally their mother steps away from public life while the young demand intense care. In the past, this proved somewhat problematic, as the mother's financial and business affairs were left to their own devices. The advent of the Information Age has allowed mothers to continue caring for their young while maintaining their other obligations. Once the young are no longer entirely dependent on the mother, generally at six to 12 months, their care is shared between their mother and their fathers.

Female Gurvin children attend school from the ages of three to 16, where they learn the basics of mathematics, business management, economics and the intricacies of supply and demand. Their mothers closely monitor their education. Male young also attend school but this is more of a vocational education which only lasts until they are 12 years old, at which point they enter the workforce as an apprentice under the guidance of an adult male.

At 16 years of age, Gurvin children are sexually mature. Despite their sexual maturity, Gurvin are not yet considered adults in the eyes of society. Females may continue their education by attending university or entering the workforce and furthering their education directly through occupation.

MARRIAGE

Gurvin marriage has no basis in any religious institution whatsoever. The terms' marriage', 'wife' and 'husband' are used here to identify their relationship. A male Gurvin is considered married to a female once his dowry price is provided to his family. Marriage is not thought to be binding until the death of either partner. It is not unusual for a wife to trade a husband for another suitable dowry price. Marriage in and of itself holds little value to female Gurvin except as a means to establish a dynasty. Males may be traded and swapped as needs fit. This is not to say females do not become attached to their males. On the contrary, some females become so attached to particular males they will not part with them for any reason, or at the very least until a suitably, that is, very expensive, compensatory dowry is offered.

Before they are considered adults, female Gurvin must repay the expenses their mother accrued while they were being reared. During this period, females will continue to live in the family unit. Their income goes towards supporting the family and paying their debt to their mother. Once the debt is settled, female Gurvin are free to leave home, marry and start a family, business or enterprise.

Male Gurvin are not expected to repay the cost of their rearing before being considered adults. Instead, they are considered adults once they join another female's family as a husband and a dowry price is gifted to his mother as restitution for the expenses incurred in his upbringing.

Regardless of age, female Gurvin are always considered a part of their mother's family, regardless of having a family of their own. Male Gurvin, on the other hand, cut all ties with their mother's family when they marry and are considered a member of their new family group solely.

COMMUNITY

Gurvin communities follow a similar organisation to the family unit. While Gurvin have experimented with different formats for communities, they prefer one with a degree of democracy, generally through elected representatives who serve to act for the group.

Generally, each Gurvin community is led by a group of elected females. These females are normally drawn from those who have successful business enterprises or industries. Gurvin believe an individual who shows success through the growth of wealth in their chosen field would be likewise as successful in leading the community. This is a logical conclusion, as Gurvin organise and run their governments and communities as if they were a conglomeration of business.

Community infrastructure and services are operated as independent businesses, with no input from the government. If those businesses fail to succeed or do not provide the required services, their customers will turn to another that will. This method of organisation is used to run most services usually run by a government, including emergency services, healthcare, education, sanitation and so forth. It is not unusual for an agency, such as sanitation, run as a single entity by other species, to be owned and operated by several businesses in a given Gurvin community. A significant divergence of this structure is the police force. The government is responsible for the safety of its citizens and the police are one of the very few public services seen in Gurvin communities.

By their very nature, many Gurvin businesses are family affairs, sometimes run by the same family for generations. Some highly successful businesses can be traced through the same family to pre-spaceflight Ofilaq. Such are held in high regard by the Gurvin and are a source of aspiration for young Gurvin entrepreneurs.

Gurvin communities provide no welfare support for those unable to care for themselves. There is no unemployment or disability benefit, free education or universal healthcare. Adult individuals are expected to care for and support themselves and their family. The community is not responsible for caring for or supporting the individual and champions those who can fend for themselves.

Adults who cannot fend for themselves are normally the responsibility of businesses who see to their care. The recipient of such care is still expected to pay for services, typically working within their limited capacity.

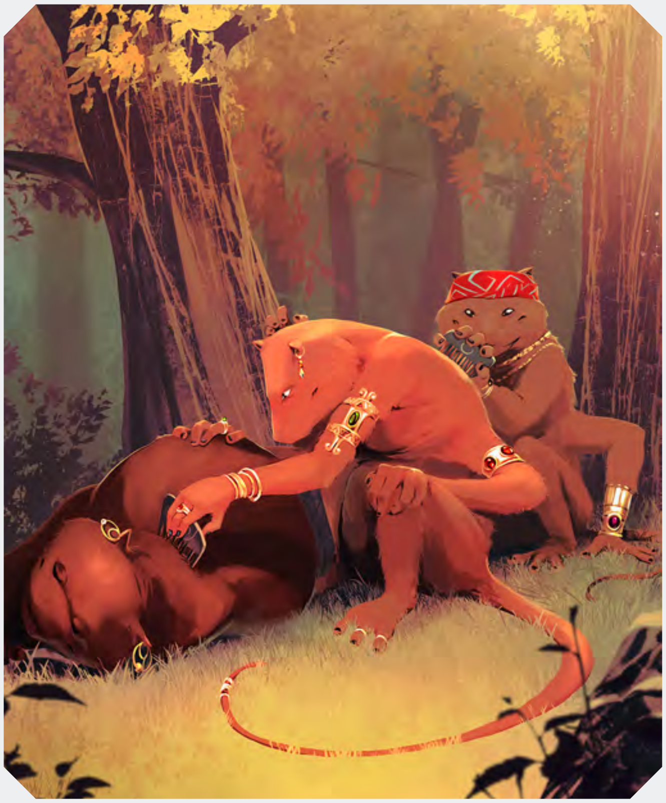
Unsurprisingly, Gurvin societies tend to have some of the lowest incidences of unemployment and homelessness throughout Charted Space. However, this has nothing to do with their charitable nature.

GROOMING

Grooming holds a special place in Gurvin society. Besides the obvious benefits of grooming, such as removing dirt, dry skin and insects from the fur, grooming is how Gurvin relax and bond with each other. Grooming also serves the vital function of spreading UV-resistant oils produced by glands under the upper pairs of limbs throughout the fur, protecting them from the harmful radiations of their homeworld's sun.

Originally, grooming was performed with bare hands and face, with the Gurvin either grooming themselves or another. Primitive Gurvin developed tools to assist in grooming before hunting tools, quickly replacing bare-handed grooming.

Grooming begins when Gurvin are still babies. At first, only their mother grooms them but as they grow older, the young learn to do so to themselves and each other for comfort and strengthen their sibling bonds. Once fathers become involved in child



rearing, they groom the young and teach appropriate etiquette. This behaviour continues as the young grow into adulthood. Parents will groom their young, husbands will groom their wives and each other, and females will groom other females who have a higher status within the community.

It is common for female Gurvin involved in business deals or political manoeuvring to groom each other to smooth social interactions. Social grooming assists in identifying ties of leadership and relationship and is used to show supplication and ease anxiety. Grooming is also used to maintain friendly relations among family and community members.

Grooming can include any number of individuals of different ages and genders. It can last from a few seconds as a ritualised greeting to minutes as a method to resolve disagreements or seal a deal, to hours during intense business or political negotiations.

BELIEFS

Gurvin have a strong story-telling tradition extolling the successes and follies of cultural heroes and cultural fools. Many of the tales originated in oral traditions from the past and were not transcribed for several centuries after their first telling. Initially, the stories were told by adults and addressed themes such as wealth-building, religion, society and politics. They later came to be used as ethical guides for children's education. The tales are now enjoyed by modern Gurvin, both adult and child, through depictions in novels, plays, holovids, songs, sculptures and paintings.

All heroes and fools in the tales are believed to have once existed or still exist to the present day. In truth, many of the main characters may have some basis. However, all have been exaggerated and compounded upon, making the characters larger than life and, in some cases, capable of actions far beyond what other species would consider believable. The tales all teach lessons regarding the important values and principles of Gurvin, particularly the methods and rules surrounding gathering wealth.

Cultural heroes always exemplify the primary drive of all female Gurvin to build wealth or the braveness of male Gurvin in protecting and providing for their wives and families. Cultural fools show the folly of female Gurvin turning away from the drive to build wealth or male Gurvin attempting to achieve more than they are capable of.

One of the most beloved cultural heroes is Lele-Seck. Her tales are told to children and adults alike, appearing in secular and religious circles. Her adventures usually revolve around how she cleverly clinches a deal or makes a significant amount of money through a successful trade or by outsmarting others who wish to stop her in one underhanded manner or another. Her tales have often been compared to those told by the Solomani of a Terran rabbit from the 'Deep South' who frequently outsmarted a bear and a fox.

Gurvin have developed a multitude of religions, the majority preaching the values of accumulating wealth. There is no universal belief amongst the Gurvin regarding a soul or afterlife. A minority of Gurvin have even turned to the religions of other species in their search for spirituality.

The species has rarely turned to armed conflict over their religious beliefs. In contrast, they tend to adopt and adapt the beliefs of other religions to their own. In this manner, several Gurvin religions have achieved a statistically large number of followers. Other religions could be best described as little more than cults.

A selection of the most well-known Gurvin religions are detailed here.

Kree Drikak au Wani: An ancient religion, Kree Drikak au Wani, or the 'Celestial Office of the Divine Mogul', is thousands of years old. Its origin can be traced back to the earliest civilisation on Ofilaq and shows clear evidence of having absorbed at least three other religions throughout its history. The religion is highly focused on the accumulation of wealth.

Kree Drikak au Wani embraces many different goddesses but most followers are henotheistic, meaning they worship a single deity, known as Spe-Wratha, or the Divine Mogul. Other goddesses are also recognised, who each preside over a particular aspect of wealth accumulation. The goddesses are all connected through a web of blood and financial ties but all answer ultimately to the Divine Mogul, who is seen as the head or Chief Executive of the Pantheon.

Followers make offerings to goddesses based on what they wish to achieve. For example, when starting a new business endeavour, followers will pray and make offerings to Tra-Pankif, the goddess of successful business ventures, to ensure all goes well. They may also pray to Nea-Leld, the goddess of attracting money through sound decisions, or Kan-Welky, the goddess of clearing obstructions to building wealth. Alternatively, they may make an offering to the Divine Mogul directly. As seen, followers believe they can attract the blessings or favours of multiple deities for the same endeavour.

Offerings to the goddesses are always in the form of monetary donations to a temple or shrine of the appropriate goddess. The offering is given to a priestess of the temple, who will accept the offering from the supplicant in exchange for praying to the goddess on their behalf. Naturally, the priestess will take a percentage of the offering for herself as payment for her services and the rest goes into the temple coffers. Temples, like almost everything else in Gurvin society, are businesses.

The religion has no single central authority. Temples can and do have subsidiary temples and shrines which operate like franchises. Each temple is led by a high priestess who, as mentioned earlier, operates the temple as a business. New priestesses are trained in temples by established priestesses. Once they have completed their training, a new priestess may remain employed by the temple which taught her, purchase a franchise temple from the high priestess, or undertake the establishment of her independent temple.

Kree Drikak au Wani has no regular services the laity is expected to attend. Instead, temples may be visited freely but entrance always involves a fee. Within the temple, followers may undertake personal worship or seek the assistance of a priestess. Instead of services, each goddess has several festivals attributed to her throughout the year. The most popular festivals can draw crowds of thousands where offerings are made to the celebrated goddess and followers receive blessings from priestesses.

Followers of Kree Drikak au Wani do not believe in an afterlife as such. Instead, they believe the soul of an individual is divided amongst her offspring in the form of both reincarnation and spiritual immortality. By not having children, followers believe their soul cannot continue after death and is forever written off as a 'loss' by the Divine Mogul.

The priestesses of Kree Drikak au Wani are also responsible for the execution of the faithful's last will and testimony. The priestess of Raa-Spul, the goddess of rightful inheritances, performs this task. Followers routinely request the priestesses to oversee their estate upon their death and ensure the deceased's wealth is fairly distributed to their female decedents. Naturally, the priestess takes a percentage of the estate as her service fee.

Koo oeo Tramup ea: Almost as popular as Kree Dricak au Wani, Koo oeo Tramup ea shares some of the same beliefs as the more popular religion but its differences are telling.

Loosely translated as The Way of Divine Ascendance, Koo oeo Tramup ea holds the Divine Mogul as the supreme deity. She created the universe, the world and all life. She made the Gurvin in her image. While the religion is open to everyone, Gurvin remain the majority of followers. The Gurvin are the Divine Mogul's 'chosen' but other sophonts may join the chosen ranks by adhering to the tenants of the faith.

A core principle of the faith is the belief in an eternal soul or spirit which lives on after death. The soul's destiny depends on the wealth the individual gained in life. The wealth is used to purchase a place in the Vixaklim Tohee or Celestial Board. The souls of those who die without enough wealth are doomed to the Kanskeu Raspuul or the Floors of Labour.

Upon death, the faithful believe the Divine Mogul judges them. In her ledger is a record of everything the Gurvin has gained and everything she has lost. If the gain outweighs the loss, she is granted entry into the Celestial Board, where she is rewarded with a position in the Celestial Executive for the rest of eternity. If the loss is greater, her soul is cast into Floors of Labour to work and hopefully earn enough to pass into the Celestial Board.

The religion stipulates how wealth can be made so it may be tallied to her advantage in the afterlife. The Gurvin must not build her wealth through theft. Conversely, the faith holds in high-standing smart trading, monopolising desired goods and services, manipulating markets and creating tight and crafty contracts. The religion champions capitalism and entrepreneurship, lauding the discovery of new markets and the formation of monopolies.

The faithful are under no obligation to make offerings of wealth to the Divine Accountant. They make offerings of wealth to the priestess of the faith, who provide their blessings in return. Blessings are sought for many occasions, such as the birth of offspring, a new marriage, a newly paid debt, the beginning of a new endeavour and so on.

An ‘area’ can be as small as a single town or as large as an entire planet. As in Kree Drikak au Wani, there is no one authority which leads the religion. Instead, the high priestesses of the temples in an area hold annual conferences, where the state of the faith is discussed, conflicts resolved and new canon is established. Once every 10 years, the high priestesses in the Hive Federation come together in a grand conference on the Gurvin homeworld.

Kree Drikak au Wani funerary rites are unusual. Traditionally, Gurvin are cremated with their wealth. It is believed the cremated wealth is used to provide a comfortable afterlife. Traditionally, all of a Gurvin’s wealth was destroyed in a funerary pyre. It was not unusual for her surviving husbands to be cremated with her – voluntarily or involuntarily. Most modern Gurvin societies have outlawed the practice of living husband immolation as barbaric. Instead, idols of living husbands are made of flammable materials are burned instead. Similarly, the funerary destruction of wealth has been replaced with burning replicas made of combustible materials.

Oo Giphlan Dia: A cult more than a religion, Oo Giphlan Dia is otherwise known as the Children of the Star God. Founded shortly after the Hivers first contacted the Gurvin, a belief developed regarding the Hivers being the direct agents of the god Maslanuud, the cosmic manipulator. Followers believed the cosmic manipulator of the Hivers would guide them towards the final manipulation, an apocalypse that remakes the universe into an eternal paradise.

There is some argument to support the theory that the Hivers created the cult themselves to manipulate the Gurvin. No records indicate such an event occurred and when questioned about the matter, Hivers vehemently deny it. Regardless of the origin, some Hiver groups during early contact saw the formation of the religion as advantageous, allowing them to enact the roles of divine emissaries with the express purpose of swiftly bringing about changes within Gurvin society.

Regardless of any Hiver involvement, the situation becomes out of hand. The cult began acting on its own. Gurvin believers attributed almost everything to Hiver intervention. Factions of the cult adopted blood sacrifice to appease the Hivers, while others undertook crusades to bring unbelievers into the fold. Countless atrocities were committed in the Hivers’ name.

Cult members used masks made to resemble the Hiver primary limbs, so they deceived the cosmic manipulator into believing they were its emissaries. They hoped the cosmic manipulator would reveal its plans directly, allowing them to bring about the eternal paradise themselves. Cult rites were performed in silence, the cultists ‘chanting’ using Hiver sign language instead of their voices.

Once the Hivers realised what had happened, they swiftly ended the matter. The results were not subtle – they calmly stated the beliefs were an affront to them. The Hivers made it plain they were under no divine mandate and any inference to the contrary had no basis in truth.

For the large part, the Hivers intercession succeeded but not before Ofilaq was plunged into its only religious war. The cult was outlawed everywhere. Those found guilty of perpetuating the tenets of Oo Giphlan Dia were heavily fined beyond bankruptcy and forced into hard labour to pay their fines. For the wealth-obsessed Gurvin, this was enough incentive for believers to recant their faith openly so they could return to regular society.

Publicly, the cult of Oo Giphlan Dia was eradicated and consigned to history as an unfortunate and bloody chapter in Gurvin history. While not proud of it, the Gurvin do not shy away from teaching this aspect of their history as an abject lesson in how zealotry can turn even the most level-headed Gurvin.

The cult continued in secret. Pockets of the faithful took their cult underground to be practised in secret. In this manner, the cult continued to exist in small groups on Ofilaq – each cell existing as an independent unit with only a few members. The cult eventually spread offworld to other planets and other species but was never able to achieve a powerful following again, thanks to its outlawed status. Oo Giphlan Dia enjoyed a brief resurgence during the K'Kree-Hiver War, but as in the past it was not tolerated and swiftly eradicated once the war concluded.

In truth, nobody knows if the cult still exists or if it has faded away only to haunt the memories of the living.

In some ways, the fear of the cult has far outgrown its reality, as it has become the source of fear-mongering and conspiracy theories. Mothers use the cult to scare their children and the mentally unhinged see its manipulations everywhere. Hivers deny the cult's existence, stating categorically it ceased to exist hundreds of years ago.

GOVERNMENT

Gurvin have experimented with a few forms of government but tend to favour democracies of one form or another. Gurvin prefer limited governments which unconditionally ban the use of force and coercion, including fraud, with little or no economic interventionism such as regulation and subsidies. Governments generally rely on businesses to self-regulate and a free market to drive competition.

Some outsiders believe this system leads to a disregard for quality, durability, sustainability, respect for the environment and sophonts, and a lack of morality as companies naturally aim to maximise profits at the expense of workers and broader social interests. Gurvin argue that under their system, relationships between companies and workers are purely voluntary and mistreated workers will seek better treatment elsewhere. Companies compete for workers based on pay, benefits and work-life balance just as they compete with one another in the marketplace on the basis of cost and quality of goods.

The agencies customarily found within other governments are lacking in Gurvin societies. Instead, the functions of government agencies are privatised. The only agencies not tendered out include the military and judiciary, which fall directly under the control of the government. Everything else, from waste removal, public transport, education and so on, are owned and operated by private businesses with little to no oversight by the government.

Gurvin governments rarely institute income taxes, as they view this as damaging welfare by penalising production. Instead, they institute a tax on land rent to cover government expenditure. This form of taxation leads to some interesting situations where non-Gurvin businesses maintain production plants on Gurvin planets as a form of tax evasion – which Gurvin naturally highly admire.

Only female Gurvin are permitted to run for government positions. Politicians tend to be wealthy business owners who can afford to run for political office and cover the expenses of an election campaign. This has led to governments becoming plutocracies, where governance is restricted to the wealthy. In many respects, this is indeed the case – Gurvin hold business success in very high regard and believe if Gurvin can run a successful business, she will be able to run a successful government. Male Gurvin are permitted to be employed in the government but these positions are unilaterally minor with no decision-making responsibilities.

LAW

As would be expected of a species that places great emphasis on gaining personal wealth, Gurvin laws are strongly biased towards protecting property. Other laws are quite lax for the most part, except in cases of fraud, coercion and force. Theft and fraud are the two most serious crimes to Gurvin sensibilities and draw the most severe punishments. Laws protecting against theft and fraud are long and complex – even conspiring to commit theft or fraud is a serious crime.

The use of coercion and force sit just below the previously mentioned crimes in seriousness. Freedom, the right to pursue their own agenda and freely earn and gain wealth, are considered fundamental rights to Gurvin and strongly protected by law. Any act which moves to restrict an individual from exercising those rights is severely punished.

Laws governing the inheritance of wealth are quite complex. Female Gurvin invariably create a will as soon as they begin earning their own wealth, which is added to and reviewed throughout her life. The will must be witnessed by at least two female Gurvin unrelated to the will-maker and then endorsed by a government official. A will, witnessed and endorsed in such a manner, cannot be disputed. This is one of the very few times the government is involved in an individual's wealth in Gurvin law.

A committee appointed by the government hears Gurvin trials. The accused and the accuser may represent themselves but more normally hire a lawyer to act on their behalf. The accused party is assumed guilty and must prove their innocence before the appointed committee.

Punishments normally take the form of a fine paid to the injured party or the government if there is none. Once an individual fails to prove their innocence, both parties begin negotiating an appropriate fine. The government-appointed committee states the lowest fine permissible by the law, from which the bargaining begins. Once an agreement has been reached by both the prosecution and defence, the fine is endorsed as having been undertaken as stipulated in the law and recorded by the government committee.

Gurvin have very few gaols and those they do have are reserved for criminals who cannot pay their fines. Gaols are independent businesses and are nothing less than indentured workshops. Inmates are forced to work off their fines through labour of one form or another. Their labour earns a wage, with which they must pay their fine. Once the fine has been paid off, the prisoner must pay for their expenses while incarcerated. Labour is invariably low-skilled and often demeaning.

While female Gurvin are subject to the full letter of the law, male Gurvin are somewhat protected. As they are less intelligent and capable than females, they are legally the female's responsibility to which they are most closely related. In the case of married Gurvin, wives are responsible for the actions of their husbands. Single males are their mother's responsibility, or in the case of the mother being deceased, their eldest female sibling. When a male Gurvin commits a crime, their female relative is held responsible for his actions and is treated as if she had committed the crime herself.

DRESS, ART AND ARCHITECTURE

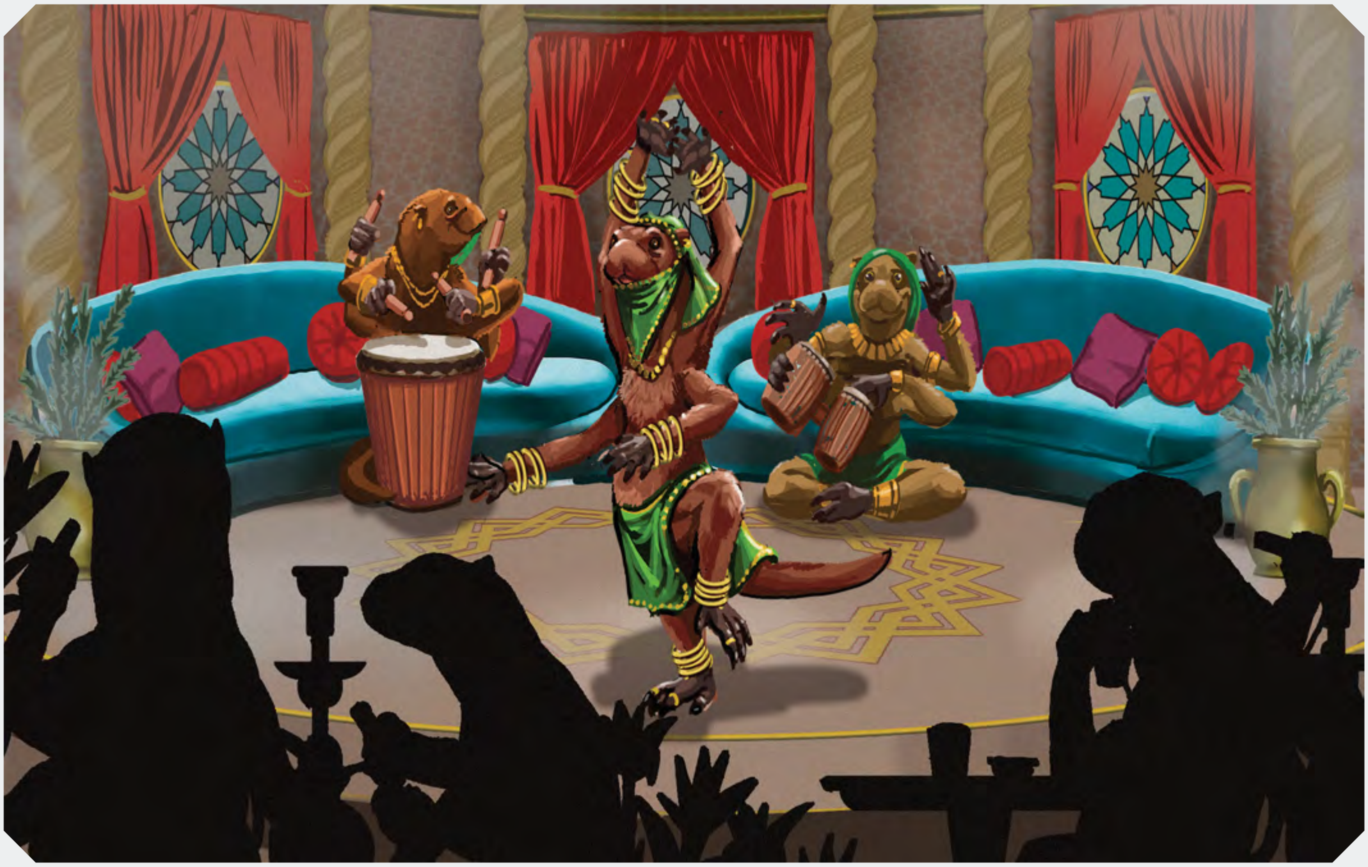
Gurvin fur covers most of their body, providing adequate protection in temperate environments. In such environments, Gurvin have no requirement for clothing. This has naturally led to the Gurvin having no taboos regarding nudity. When amongst themselves, Gurvin only wear clothing to protect them from temperature or environmental extremes. They understand other species may have taboos regarding nudity and will wear clothing to avoid causing any embarrassment when among them. In such cases, Gurvin will adopt a simple style of a loose tunic over loose pants or a poncho which extends to just below the knees. Solid colours are normally chosen, although Gurvin favour clashing tones over a matching ensemble. They prefer light materials, which impart a clear impression of wealth – the wealthier the Gurvin, the more expensive the clothes. They rarely adopt any footwear unless required for protection.

While clothing has a purely functional use in Gurvin society, personal decoration is another matter – Gurvin loves nothing more than a prominent display of wealth through jewellery and finery. Both females and males wear headbands containing rare gems. Bracelets, bangles and anklets are common, constructed of valuable metals and decorated with gems. Finger, toe and earrings are also very common, consisting of valuable metals and gemstones.

Females prefer slightly more subtle forms of jewellery than males, whose jewellery tends towards far bolder – and some would say ostentatious – designs. Females often display wealth by lavishly adorning their husbands, especially during the breeding season. Traditionally, arm antler jewellery is common and includes items such as cuffs, chains and piercings. Male Gurvin love the attention their finery affords them and are not above strutting about proudly when adorned.

Gurvin enjoy many different art forms. The works of well-known artists draw large crowds and can be worth a significant number of credits. Their creations can even be known in the broader Hive Federation and sometimes beyond. Gurvin artworks are rare in the Third Imperium but have attracted a small and select group of collectors willing to pay handsomely for favoured pieces.

Painting and drawing are common amongst Gurvin. Before the advent of photography and holography, portraiture, landscapes and still life were highly popular. Once the ability to capture a subject's likeness could be achieved via artificial means in a far less labour-



intensive way, their popularity waned. This led to a revolution in Gurvin painting and drawing, culminating in what modern critics call the Trans-Tech Abstract Style, where artists create works that do not represent external reality and are instead designed to elicit an emotional response in the viewer.

Sculpture has followed a similar path as painting and drawing, with abstract styles replacing realistic ones. One type of sculpture bears mention here: olfactory.

Olfactory sculptures are designed to interact with the sense of smell. Gurvin sense of smell is highly tuned and can detect minor changes in scents. Olfactory sculptures are usually quite large, with the smallest occupying the space of a small room. Scents within the sculpture are placed and emitted in a choreographed fashion to generate a mental image and elicit emotional responses. These sculptures are often highly complex, causing strong reactions in Gurvin participants. Outside a Gurvin audience, olfactory sculptures do not draw a broad following. The scents tend to be far too subtle for humans to differentiate between and most find them more unpleasant or nauseating than enjoyable.

Gurvin literature serves a multitude of purposes, from purely artistic to educational and spiritual. Almost without exception, literature focuses on the escapades of cultural heroes and their endeavours to gain wealth or the follies of fools. While new tales are constantly being authored, they are most often derivative of previous works, only written in a different style or told from other perspectives.

Likewise, Gurvin performing arts generally mimic the literary arts, focusing on the cultural heroes with one exception: dance. Typically considered a male art form, dance is used to tell stories or generate pleasure. Dance forms vary from ancient traditional styles to modern creations and fusions. The Gardraxa Style is an ancient dance form typically described as sensual and evocative, used in formal occasions for female viewers. It is also performed at celebrations of weddings, the sealing of business deals and other important events. A contemporary version of the style, called Gordraxa, is considered somewhat lewd, uncouth and unsuitable for polite company.

An annual dance festival known as the Gipuma Isuhaash, loosely translated as the 'bachelor's gambit', is celebrated by every Gurvin community. On the Spring Equinox, bachelors and young males who have just come of age dance for the attention of potential mates. Bedecked in the finest jewellery and their fur dyed in bright colours, male Gurvin dance competitively against each other while females look on. If a female is attracted to a male, she will tap them once on the shoulder. The male then escorts the female to his family to discuss a suitable dowry price for him. If all goes as planned and the dowry price changes hands, the pair are considered joined in marriage.

Gurvin evolved from ancestors who dug and lived in underground dens. While modern Gurvin no longer need to live underground, they feel a sense of comfort and safety when they can dwell in a den-like structure. Gurvin generally have no concern for their habitats' impact on the local environment and have no issues damaging or destroying native habitats and ecosystems for their own use.

Surface architecture is generally utilitarian, with no thought for aesthetic or pleasing features. Construction materials tend to be metals, ceramics and polymers. Buildings are considered ugly and unrefined by many other species. Doors and windows are often circular or semi-circular and skylights are common. Windows tend to be large, allowing maximum natural light into the building.

Buildings are often grouped very closely together, making Gurvin cities somewhat claustrophobic. Taller structures are usually connected via corridors on several levels, allowing occupants to move between buildings easily without leaving them.

Gurvin do not generally separate residential areas from business areas. Cities have no separate business, industrial or residential districts. Gurvin prefer to live close to where they work. It is the norm to find residences interspersed with offices and manufacturing spaces all in the same structure or built very closely together. Open areas, such as parks and gardens, are uncommon in Gurvin cities and those which do exist are for purely necessary means and only accessible to the public for a fee paid to the owner.

Gurvin residences and commercial buildings share common internal styles – a central foyer from which other rooms branch. In a commercial building, adjacent rooms may be offices, production floors and the like. In residences, additional rooms tend to be for personal use.

Bedrooms are communal. Gurvin do not have the same sense of privacy as humans. The whole family will generally share one room. The only exception to communal sleeping is when a female Gurvin gives birth or has helpless young. A separate maternity room is part of every domicile where a mother may peacefully give birth and keep her young until she is ready to introduce them to the rest of the family.

Gurvin prefer to use a minimum of furniture. They dislike chairs and prefer to sit on the floor on cushions. Gurvin do not consider lounging on cushions to be rude or disrespectful. Beds are only slightly raised off the floor and covered with plush cushions and linen. Solid furniture tends to be rounded in design with few sharp edges. Tables and desks are built close to the ground.

Gurvin cities have a reputation for suffering from significant pollution. With no laws regulating industrial or domestic contamination, the only limitation is how much residents and workers will accept before moving away to more pleasant environments. Industries and businesses will have little concern for polluting the environment until they see a decline in the population and workforce, which will result in a reduction of polluting practices and a series of clean-up projects. As a result, Gurvin cities can be smoggy and smelly, waterways contaminated with low-level toxic waste and large areas of natural habitat destroyed.

Advertisements festoon Gurvin buildings, hawking everything from standard consumables to luxury items to holiday destinations. The most common are giant holo ads projected up and down the sides of skyscrapers. Walkways, footpaths and public transport stations are likewise full of holo advertisements, shifting and changing as pedestrians pass by, keyed by facial recognition and recent data web searches. These advertisements add to the general noise pollution of cities, making them not only dirty and smelly but noisy too.

RECREATION

Recreation is seen as just another business opportunity to gain wealth amongst the Gurvin. Almost all recreational activities have an associated cost and some can be lucrative.

Gurvin love to gamble, which is almost a universal pastime. It is said that Gurvin will bet on almost anything. Casinos and gambling halls are standard fixtures in Gurvin cities. Games of chance tend to take the forms of card and dice games in casinos but almost any form of a game can be found by a persistent punter. In the past and on lower-tech planets, animal races and fights are commonly gambled upon. However, with the advent of advanced technology and robotics, animals are frequently replaced with artificial stand-ins which serve the same purpose.

Sports are generally not enjoyed by Gurvin, except for a noted two – dancing and acrobatics. Husbands dance for their wives, eligible bachelors dance to attract the notice of potential spouses and boys dance for their parents. Fathers also teach their sons the fine arts of dance and acrobatics to assist them in finding wives, while dance and acrobatics schools are available for those who can afford them. Clubs, where male dancers entertain a predominantly female audience, are typical businesses wherever Gurvin are found.

Dancing and acrobatic competitions are also popular on both a professional and amateur level. The best dancers from these competitions can become immensely popular, gaining huge followings and achieving an almost cult-like status. The most prestigious competition, the Gathat Games, is held once every six years. The best dancers and acrobats from the worlds of the Gurvin Democratic Republic are ranked and randomly paired with each other to compete for the prestigious title of Epara Aia Uaaua, loosely translated as The Mover of Desire.

Adult Gurvin enjoy smoking as a form of relaxation and bonding. Smoking is performed individually and in groups. Among the various substances smoked is the highly favoured, mildly addictive mood-altering herb native to Ofilaq called phlootau. The taste and smell of phlootau smoke can be somewhat acrid, so Gurvin add a flavouring substance to sweeten it. Smoking substances are added to a hookah-like device, which smooths the harshness of smoke by drawing it through water. Modern Gurvin sometimes use an electronic hookah which uses water vapour and the essential oils of phlootau, instead of the traditional hookah.

Gurvin also enjoy theatre and cinema. The subjects of such entertainment are almost invariably the tales of cultural heroes with strong moral lessons regarding the gathering or earning of wealth. Theatre or cinema which do not focus on these subjects holds little interest for Gurvin, who see such things as frivolous and a waste of time.

BUSINESS

Gurvin businesses are always owned, controlled and operated by females. Interestingly, Gurvin companies have relatively few directly employed individuals. Instead, they tender positions to contractors who bid for the role, with the person offering the best value for money winning. A subcontractor may then tender for more contractors to undertake aspects of the role they have won. In this manner, a company or business would consist of a few directly employed managers with all other roles undertaken by contracted personnel.

Gurvin do not possess any megacorporations but several large corporations extend beyond the two sectors of the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic. Gurvin are the primary shareholders of these corporations, although many have shares owned by other species and companies. In particular, Hivers have found it useful to support Gurvin corporations through shareholding.

Gurvin corporation offices can be found primarily within the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic but some have offices which can be found throughout the Hive Federation. Some even have offices reaching beyond to Solomani, K'Kree and unaligned space. Despite their wide territory, all large Gurvin corporations have their headquarters within the borders of the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic, where they enjoy rather lax taxation laws.

Large Gurvin corporations contract sophonts in the millions, showing no preference for any one particular species over another except where their talents are particularly useful. For example, corporations prefer hiring Za'tachk as administrators, accountants and clerks due to their cooperative nature and obsession with details. Likewise, Ithklur are employed in security roles due to their imposing nature and willingness to utilise force to ensure the safety of corporate property and staff.

Gurvin corporations generally operate in an air of rational self-interest – the Hive Federation is a good place to conduct business. They would want to do nothing to disrupt the free market and laisse fair capitalism deliberately. However, rivalries can spill over into trade wars, or corporate leaders may come to act at cross-purposes with a powerful Hiver nest. Corruption within megacorporations is also not unheard of either.

Some of the significant megacorporations found in the Hive Federation are:

Geopath General Trading: A general electronics, trading house and shipping firm, Geopath General Trading also indulges in speculative trade and advertises itself as a supplier of rare and luxury items. They have a large fleet of starships which ply the space lanes across the Hive Federation. Geopath is intensely competitive with Idigu Shipping for the rights to particularly lucrative trade routes.

Idigu Shipping: Idigu Shipping specialises in the transport of passengers and freight. They do not own a fleet but subcontract to other shipping companies or ship owners to carry cargo and passengers under their flag. They experience stiff competition with Geopath General Trading on lucrative trade routes but they hold the upper hand in passenger services.

Lamuskshaash: Another general electronics firm, Lamuskshaash manufactures avionics, computers, robots and information retrieval systems. Their major competitor in the electronics field is Geopath General Trading, although they target their products at different demographics. Lamuskshaash robots range from small surveillance drones to heavy industrial automatons.

Mugimgu-Shikhegdi: Mugimgu-Shikhegdi began as two separate companies, Mugimgu Shipyards, which manufactured starships, and Shikhegdi, which fabricated heavy vehicles. Mugimgu suffered some spectacular financial losses due to several unfortunate shipyard accidents, causing their profits to suffer considerably. Shikhegdi offered a merger to save the company, which Mugimgu accepted on the proviso they maintained 51% of the stocks. Mugimgu-Shikhegdi specialises in manufacturing heavy machinery, including starships, vehicles and space habitats. They have a reputation for producing sturdy and safe products. Many larger starports in the subsectors surrounding the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic have a Mugimgu-Shikhegdi shipyard in orbit or dirtside. Their vehicles are primarily intended for military or heavy industry uses, although a line of luxury grav vehicles are produced by Shikhegdi-Susami for their more discerning client clients.

Moteton Mining: Starting on Iilregon (Folgore sector 1404), Moteton Mining began as a simple local asteroid mining firm. The company struck it rich with a lucky find of precious industrial metals and steadily grew in size, absorbing several smaller mining firms. In a few short decades, Moteton Mining had extended its reach beyond Folgore sector and then to the surrounding subsectors than a century later. Moteton Mining has expanded beyond asteroid mining and is now interested in all forms of mining, from strip mining to hydrogen mining. Moteton has a reputation for aggressively protecting their interest and are known to undertake hostile takeovers of companies they see as standing in their way. Interestingly, Moreton Mining is also interested in textiles, particularly artificial textiles used in the construction and military fields.

Phlotlalu Agronomics: Phlotlalu Agronomics specialises in supporting agriculture in all its myriad forms. They operate farms, provide agricultural education, and manufacture agricultural vehicles and robots. A major subsidiary company, Phlotlalu Pharmaceuticals manufactures drugs and medicines. Another subsidiary, Phlotlalu Genetics manufactures genetically altered plants and animals. The company experiences some competition from Mugimgu-Shikhegdi and, for some reason, Moteton Mining.

LANGUAGE

When the Hivers encountered the Gurvin, they were taken by the coincidence that both species used an ideographic script. The grammar of each was regular and possessed a similar range of concepts. Translation between the two scripts proved relatively straightforward. Conveniently, the Gurvin script also had a syllabary, so it became possible for the first time to make Hiver pronounceable. The Hivers set about adapting the Gurvin's native tongue for the Federation's benefit.

Gurvin became the Federation language for several reasons. It primarily filled the need for a readily exportable tongue that could be tied to the Hivers. Secondly, it provided well-travelled merchants with a means to talk to strangers. Each word is short with a single, unique and unambiguous meaning. There are no synonyms and a quantitative measure, the degree of similarity, replaced the concept of metaphor.

Gurvin's small vocabulary is not entirely comprehensive – some words have no Gurvin translation and many awkward concepts are unavailable to the speaker. The language is also wholly unsuited for creative expression, so there is no poetry, whimsy or humour.

By removing redundant and inconvenient concepts and replacing shades of meaning with quantities, the Hivers made the language ideally suited for statistical manipulation and modelling. Gurvin cannot express the sentiment 'less is more' and would be counting the method behind 'no greater love than this'.

Despite its almost universal adoption within the Hive Federation, the Ithklur defiantly clung to their language and professed not to understand Gurvin. The Ithklur language allows its speakers to deal with abstracts and philosophical concepts and, importantly, to use metaphors. For this reason, Ithklur pidgin is widely used as an auxiliary to Federation Gurvin among species who need the additional breadth of expression.

There is no record of primaeval Gurvin, so there is a scholarly, sometimes heated debate about how the Hivers changed the tongue to their ends. The Federation regularises the language. Embassies circulate a style guide to discourage local dialects. Linguistics clubs review any spontaneously arising usage and consider its utility to the language as a whole. If a club finds the change productive, it lobbies for its introduction. For example, the Embassies Directorate promotes using the consonant 'z', as most of the Federation's member species find the sound easy to pronounce.

This clearly illustrates the main problem with Gurvin – it is not a living language. There are no changes to it except via committee, so it lacks many concepts important to other species and common among the Major Races.

WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Unlike the Gurvin spoken language, its written language is universally used in the Hive Federation. While the Hivers would prefer their script to be used as the official written form of Gurvin, it is not a popularly held opinion. Hiver script is elegant, powerful and inherently subtle – and unsuited for use with the Gurvin language. Half of the Gurvin people cannot follow the concept of Hiver script at all and the other half do not understand the need to replace their written language.

Like their spoken language, Gurvin written language is simple. It lacks nuance and subtlety, addressing concepts directly and forthrightly. The script is a syllabary which uses written symbols to present the syllables and moras of spoken words. Each syllable uses a single character, modified by the syllable weight. These symbols are unique and not shared with any other syllable in the language. While this creates many symbols, the script is also easy to read as each word is spelled as it sounds.

GURVIN HISTORY

Genetic measurements have shown the lineage that would lead to Gurvinosapien diverging from the line that would lead to related species approximately 5.4 to 6.8 million years ago. They dwelled primarily in deciduous forests where they would dig shallow dens for shelter and to raise their young. Intelligence is believed to have arisen as an immediate necessity for females who were restricted to their dens while they bore and raised young to direct males in hunting and gathering. Anatomically modern Gurvin arose in approximately -400000 and achieved behavioural modernity in approximately -150000.

Archaeological evidence indicates Gurvinids used simple wood and stone tools for millennia but as time progressed, tools became more refined and complex. By -500000, Gurvin began to use fire for heat and cooking. During this period, language was developed, as well as rituals such as the burial of the dead and adornment of the living. Signs of early artistic expression can be found in sculptures made from simple natural materials. A climatic shift to a dryer environment forced early Gurvin into a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, following prey as it migrated with seasonal changes. The change in climate is also believed to have prompted further development of sophoncy.

Modern Gurvin spread rapidly across the continent of Serskishsgha into Kidega and Dumidi in approximately -50000. By -14000, Gurvin had colonised nearly all habitable areas on Ofilaq.

The earliest forms of spirituality saw a rise during this period. The forms of worship were directed to the sun, moon, planet and sky. Not much is known regarding the form these earliest examples of spirituality took. However, some evidence indicates that bartering or trading small valuable items was an essential aspect of worship.

RISE OF CIVILISATION

By -12000, Gurvin had developed agriculture, allowing them to forgo their nomadic lifestyle and begin creating early settlements. Such settlements started small, comprising only one or two family groups, but as the understanding of agriculture increased, so did the size of settlements. The domestication of several food animal species was achieved by -10000. The first signs of bronze use in the form of tools, weapons and adornment can be dated to as early as -8000.

The development of agriculture and animal husbandry led to food surpluses that could support Gurvin not directly engaged in food production, leading directly to denser populations and the formation of cities and states. Cities became the centres of trade, manufacturing and political power, leading to the rise of the earliest civilisations. Early proto-cities appeared in Magenissh and Ulase around -7000.

The first true city-states developed in approximately -5550 in the central and coastal regions of Serskishsgha, namely in the Lalaka Highlands, Sakkiba Valley and along the Niirdali River. Anonoo, located in the Lalaka Highlands, is believed to be the first complex civilisation. In these cities, the earliest forms of writing appeared around -4800.

These earliest civilisations led to the rise of territorial states and empires. In the Lalaka Highlands, there had been a prevailing pattern of waring independent city-states with a loose oligarchy of leaders shifting from one city to another. The cause of most conflict was over territory. Female Gurvin saw the need to control as many regions as possible to indicate wealth and power. By -4200, the Lalaka Highlands were unified into a single polity known as the Rannili Empire.

Similar empires arose in the Sakkiba Valley, dominated by the City-States of Agiira and the Douai Empire along the Niirdali River. The three empires alternated between periods of peaceful trade and open conflict over territory for 150 years. None of the three civilisations achieved any great dominance over the other. Struggles of territory ownership continued unabated, with borders shifting and changing constantly. The proximity of these early empires allowed the sharing of religions and beliefs.

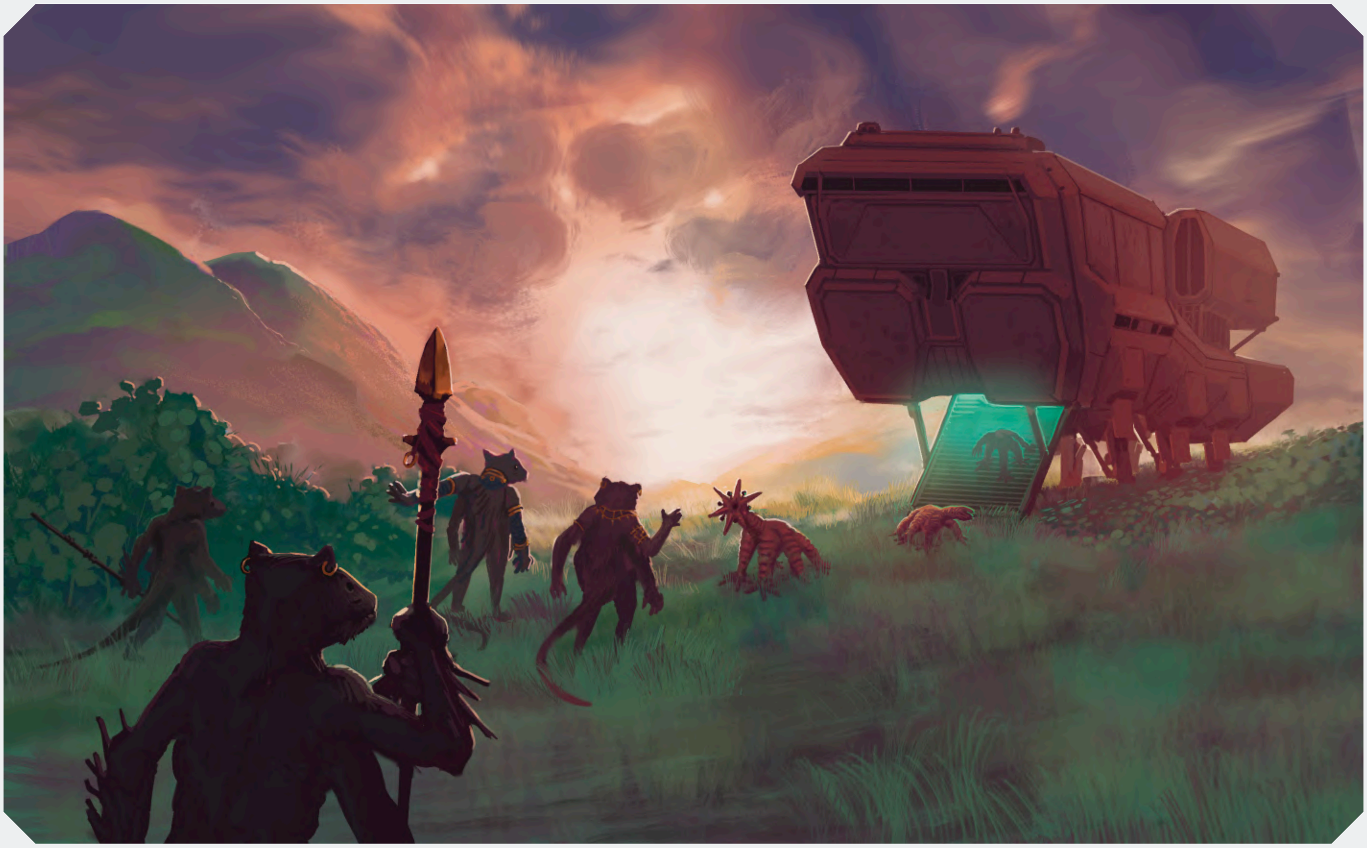
During this period, structured religion took the place of earlier worship. The religion of Kree Drikak au Wani originated in Agiira – each city-state had its own set of patron deities but all the deities of every city were united in a single pantheon. Similarly, the religion of Koo oeo Tramup ea saw its birth in the Douai Empire and spread across the continent as the empire spread. Many other religions were developed in this period. Some were absorbed into other religions, while others rose and fell as their favour waxed and waned. Archaeological evidence has shown that faith was rarely a reason for armed conflict among early civilisations. The Gurvin of this period were more likely to absorb and adopt differing religious beliefs rather than see them as opposing views.

Elsewhere on Ofilaq, most Gurvin societies remained simple and fragmented into diverse regional cultures. Some were content to remain in small tribal groups and continue a nomadic lifestyle, whilst others settled into small villages that traded for essential goods and services. The sparks of greater civilisation would occasionally arise but for unknown reasons, they never subsisted for long before fading away.

Gurvin civilisation began to spread beyond the Serskishsgha region, contacting less advanced cultures. Some were absorbed into the larger empires, while others were exterminated and their lands occupied. This pattern of expansion and absorption, warfare and trade may have continued unabated except for a major event which would forever change the course of Gurvin history – contact with the Hivers.

ARRIVAL OF THE HIVERS

An exploratory Hiver vessel arrived in the Ofilaq system and discovered the Gurvin in -4050. No initial contact was made then, as the Hivers wished to proceed carefully. The Hivers studied the Gurvin for a decade to gain an understanding of them before physical contact was made. During this period, they learnt of the Gurvin's aggressiveness in obtaining territory and made plans to divert the drive into more acceptable avenues.



Coincidently, the major Gurvin religions saw a form of reformation. Gods which were involved in the earning of monetary wealth rose in significance, while the areas of interest of other gods evolved into various aspects of obtaining prosperity. The structure of divine hierarchies also changed into something more resembling a board of directors managing a business rather than a pantheon of individual gods concerned only with their portfolios. Similarly, the Empires of Rannili and Douai, the City-States of Agiira, saw a political upheaval as their governance changed from dictatorships to republics. Precisely what the catalyst was for these broad societal changes is not clearly understood. No doubt the Hivers were involved somehow but as is typical with Hiver recorded history, the truth is difficult to ascertain.

In -4040, the Hivers made their first physical contact with the Gurvin. Initial contact was made carefully but it was a peaceful and welcomed event. The Hivers presented themselves as generous benefactors who wished to help the Gurvin grow and develop as a species. The Hivers slowly introduced new technological developments to the Gurvin, initially raising them from TL1 to TL2 over a decade. The introduction of innovations increased over time. Like doting parents, the Hivers handed out new technology when and how they felt the Gurvin were ready for it. In 150 years, the Gurvin went from the bronze age through the industrial revolution to the broadcast age.

THE RISE OF OO GIPHLAN DIA

The uplifting of Gurvin society was not without some growing pains. Shortly after Gurvin/Hiver first contact, a new religion Oo Giphlan Dia was founded. The proponents of the new faith believed a supreme deity, Maslanuud the manipulator, had sent the Hivers to the Gurvin to aid them in preparing for the final manipulation when the universe would be recreated into an eternal paradise. Hivers were believed to be the direct representatives of Maslanuud and were themselves of divine origin.

Some historical records indicate Hivers actively encouraged Oo Giphlan Dia to ensure Gurvin saw them as benefactors. Other records show that the Hivers were concerned with the new religion and its potential to cause harm. Regardless of the truth, the religion readily spread among the Gurvin and quickly developed the largest following of all faiths, extending from its birthplace in Rannili to Douai, Agiira and beyond.

Unfortunately, the spread of Oo Giphlan Dia brought some unforeseen problems. As the religion grew in power, zealotry also grew. Unknown to the majority of the priesthood, a disturbing movement was developing among the temple hierarchy in Rannili – Eenat-Oathisk, a zealous female Gurvin was plotting to overthrow the current establishment and place herself and her followers in power.

Eenat-Oathisk believed Maslanuud was the only true god. All other 'gods' were nothing but evil entities bent on disrupting Maslanuud's plans. Those who did not cease worshipping their false gods and embrace only Maslanuud deserved nothing less than death.

The Eenat-Oathisk movement rapidly gained momentum. As she advanced through the ranks of the religion's hierarchy, she placed into positions of power within the faith those who subscribed to her beliefs. She reached out to high-ranking members of society and indoctrinated them into her beliefs.

In -3875, after 15 years of careful plotting and manipulation, Eenat-Oathisk saw her chance to usurp the hierarchy and launched her coup. Her followers captured the religious and societal leaders who did not subscribe to her dogma. She announced herself as the Empress-Priestess of Rannili. She demanded all Gurvin renounce their false gods and convert to Oo Giphlan Dia. To punctuate her demands, she publicly sacrificed the captured holy city in the name of Maslanuud, stating that all other disbelievers would meet the same fate.

In other Gurvin cities, followers of Eenat-Oathisk stepped forward in similar coups. Many attempts succeeded but the coup in the Democratic Republic of Agiira failed, leaving the city and religious leaders mostly alive.

An attempt at diplomacy was made. A delegation of Hiver and Gurvin ambassadors from Agiira and the other free cities was sent to barter for peace. All were slaughtered publicly, with their heads returned in a clear message that Eenat-Oathisk would not be dissuaded from her ideals.

Hiver psychohistorians could find no indication in their formulae which indicated such an event would occur. The Hiver nest responsible for uplifting Gurvin society was summarily removed from the project and another nest was given the responsibility. Immediately the Gurvin's new benefactors reviewed the psychohistoric formulae provided by the disgraced nest and found a subtle flaw in their calculations which, when followed through logically, led to the current events inevitably unfolding as they had.

With no other recourse left to them, the Gurvin entered what they consider the most shameful period of their history – a religious world war. Fortunately, the Hivers had not introduced atomic power to the Gurvin but the effects of a war waged at TL5 were devastating enough. Hundreds of thousands of Gurvin lost their lives in a conflict the Hivers tried desperately to mitigate. The followers of Eenat-Oathisk were fanatics, more than willing to die for what they believed in, and had no hesitation in wiping out entire populations of those who opposed them.

The war raged across the globe for eight years before Eenat-Oathisk and her adherents were defeated. The religion of Oo Giphlan Dia was disbanded and its remaining followers driven underground. Despite all the damage and deaths the war had caused, it united Ofilaq into a democratic united world government. Laws were enacted to prevent the rise like Oo Giphlan Dia again – the only laws of their kind. Recovery and rebuilding commenced immediately. The Hivers assisted in the recovery efforts, ensuring through their manipulations the new world government was to their liking.

Rebuilding took the Gurvin decades and, during that time, populations exploded. The demands made by growing populations saw the need for more raw materials. The Gurvin were largely unconcerned with ecological preservation. Massive open-cut mines tore metals from the ground just as massive forests were felled to meet commercial needs. Entire environments were destroyed to feed the industrial machine, leading to large-scale extinctions. Pollution led to Ofilaq's atmosphere becoming tainted, with commensurate increases in pulmonary and other diseases. Medical sciences were turned towards seeking solutions for the sickness.

The increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere saw rapid climate change. The Gurvin continued in their ways and their planet suffered. In -3817, it became clear to the Gurvin their species risked extinction if something was not done. Plans were made and enacted to reduce the amount of pollution produced. The Hivers introduced atomic power to the Gurvin and other renewable technologies. In time and through concerted effort, the Gurvin succeeded in halting the worst effects of their pollution but the atmosphere remains tainted to this day.

TO THE STARS

The Gurvin made their first forays into space in -3800, nearly 70 years after their world war. The Hivers were reluctant to give the Gurvin access to jump technology at this point but were happy to assist them in colonising the other worlds of their system. The first offworld colony was established on Ofilaq's moon in -3760. From that staging ground, other colonies soon followed and the mining of asteroids caught in the system's four gas giant trojan points began shortly after. The riches discovered there led to an economic boon which resulted in more colonies to service the needs of the miners.

By -3650, the Hivers decided the Gurvin had matured sufficiently to be allowed outside their home system. They provided them with the secrets of jump technology with the proviso of limiting their exploration to the Aghan subsector. At first, every Gurvin exploratory starship had at least one Hiver assigned to it to act as an adviser and monitor the actions of the newly interstellar species. New habitable planets were discovered within only a few jumps from Ofilaq and extrasolar colonies were soon founded on Spakaem (Folgore sector 0304), Ataof (Folgore 0203) and Otuna (Folgore 0104). Thousands of Gurvin eager for the challenge of taming a new world and establishing new business enterprises set out for the new colonies and their populations grew rapidly.

Over the next 100 years, Gurvin continued spreading across the Aghan subsector but were halted by the spinward border and the limits of their jump technology to coreward, rimward and trailing. Repeatedly, the Gurvin requested for the Hivers to reveal the secret of jump-2 but they were told time and time again they were not ready. Despite undertaking research into jump technology, the Gurvin were unsuccessful in uncovering the secret.

Despite their limited jump capability, the Gurvin had managed to explore and colonise nine planets within one parsec of each other and their economy was booming. At this point, each Gurvin colony was an individual world under self-rule. Nothing tied the string of worlds together except for the population's origin on Ofilaq. The perceived restriction to further exploration frustrated the Gurvin's desire to explore new avenues to build wealth. To address the issue, a symposium. Representatives from each of the nine Gurvin worlds were to meet on Ofilaq to discuss methods of convincing the Hivers to release the secrets of jump-2 technology to them.

The symposium discussed many options but the representatives could all see the main roadblock to the Gurvin species being given access to jump-2 technology was a lack of a unified front. Each planetary government had requested jump-2 independently on different occasions, as had many large businesses, and all for nought. A decision was made to unite the Gurvin worlds into a single government and present their request to the Hivers as a unified whole. Plans for the new government were drawn out, discussed and amended. The representatives agreed to return to their home worlds and present the project to their populations and establish a ballot to gain an understanding of their wishes. The symposium adjourned and agreed to meet the following year.

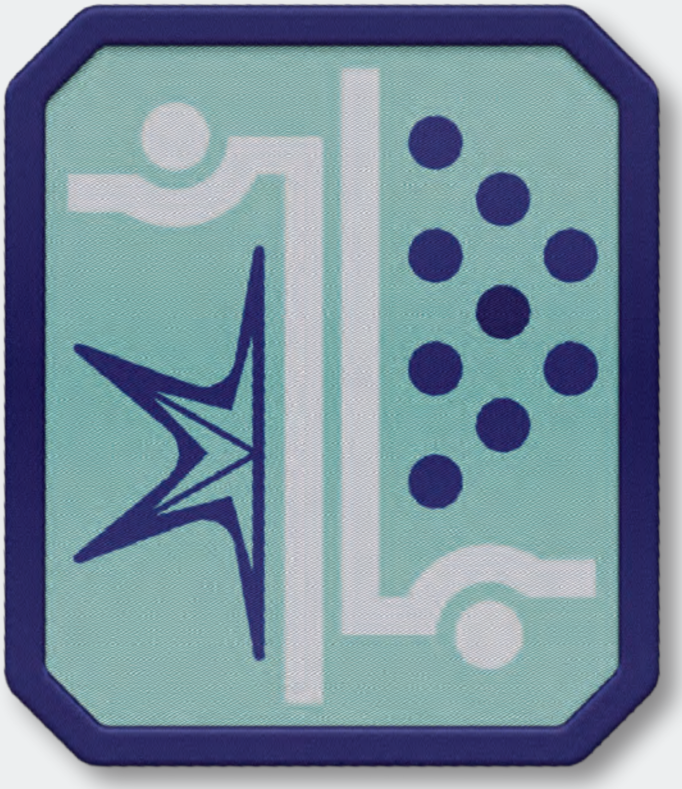
A year later, the symposium reconvened and presented the decision of their worlds. All but the population of one world, Fotracuwu (Folgore 0604), agreed to form a government, the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic, which would encompass all 10 Gurvin-populated worlds. Each world would be free to govern itself within the structure of the unifying government. The new government would defend the new polity and its constituent worlds. The headquarters of the new government would be located on Ofilaq, which would come into effect in one year. The new government's first act would be to request admission into the Hive Federation as a sovereign state and request access to jump-2 technology.

Over the next year, preparations were made for the new government. Buildings and infrastructure for the new government were constructed on Ofilaq, with offices on the other nine Gurvin worlds. Policy and guidance were written to form a starfaring defence force to protect the new polity. Embassies were built and staffed in preparation for receiving ambassadors and diplomats, including the Hive Federation.

In -3548, the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic was founded and as promised, made an official request to join the Hive Federation and be provided with the technology for the jump-2 drive. The Hive Federation had been waiting for the unification of separate Gurvin worlds into a single polity and declared them an 'adult' species no longer requiring close Hiver guidance. The Republic was quickly admitted into the Hive Federation and given access to the jump-2 drive. The Hive Federation ceded most of the Eloqim subsector for the Gurvin to explore and colonise but drew boundaries describing the extent to which the Republic could expand. The Gurvin gratefully accepted the boundaries imparted by the Hive Federation and embarked on a new era of almost equal partnership with their benefactors.

MODERN HISTORY

Today, the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic has spread to encompass most of the Aghan and Eloqim subsectors and contains 46 worlds. They have spread throughout the Hive Federation and beyond, becoming valued partners of their Hiver benefactors. Gurvin have found their niche as the Hive Federation's premier traders and business owners, exploring new markets and taking advantage of established ones. Their reputation has extended beyond the borders of the Hive Federation, where they are known as shrewd and clever entrepreneurs.



THE GURVIN INTERSTELLAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic was formed in -3548, when nine self-governing Gurvin worlds united to become members of an interstellar polity. The rules of the new polity were recorded in the Republic Contract, which defined how the government was to operate and the issues on which it could legislate.

Under the articles of the Republic Contract, powers are divided between the central government and the individual member worlds. The Republic Contract limits the functions of the government to maintain order and security while avoiding interference with the initiative of individuals in the pursuit of their desired goals. The contract ensures the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic operates in an environment of a free market and does not interfere in the economic affairs of individuals, societies and worlds. The contract forbids any oversight or legislation regarding minimum wages, duties, trade restrictions and corporate taxes.

THE REPUBLIC GOVERNMENT

The government of the Republic is formally known as the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic Assembly. It comprises a chief executive, administration, the director's board and the representatives committee.

The assembly is responsible for debating and voting on new legislation to be introduced and the amendment of established legislation. The assembly comprises the chief executive, the board and the representatives committee. In addition to making laws, the assembly holds directors and the government accountable for their actions. Directors must be members of the assembly and regularly answer questions about their portfolios asked by other members.

The Republic is divided into several single-member zones, each comprising approximately one million voters. This was devised to ensure every citizen of the Republic is equally represented in the government regardless of the population of their world. A member of the representatives committee represents each zone. Each world has a number of zones proportional to its population. Worlds which do not have a population approaching a million are assigned to a zone on another planet. Elections for the representative committee are usually held every five years.

The representative committee is the first level of the federal government. New legislation and amendments to current legislation are raised, debated and voted upon here. Those which pass a majority vote of 51% are promoted to be heard by the second level of government – the board.

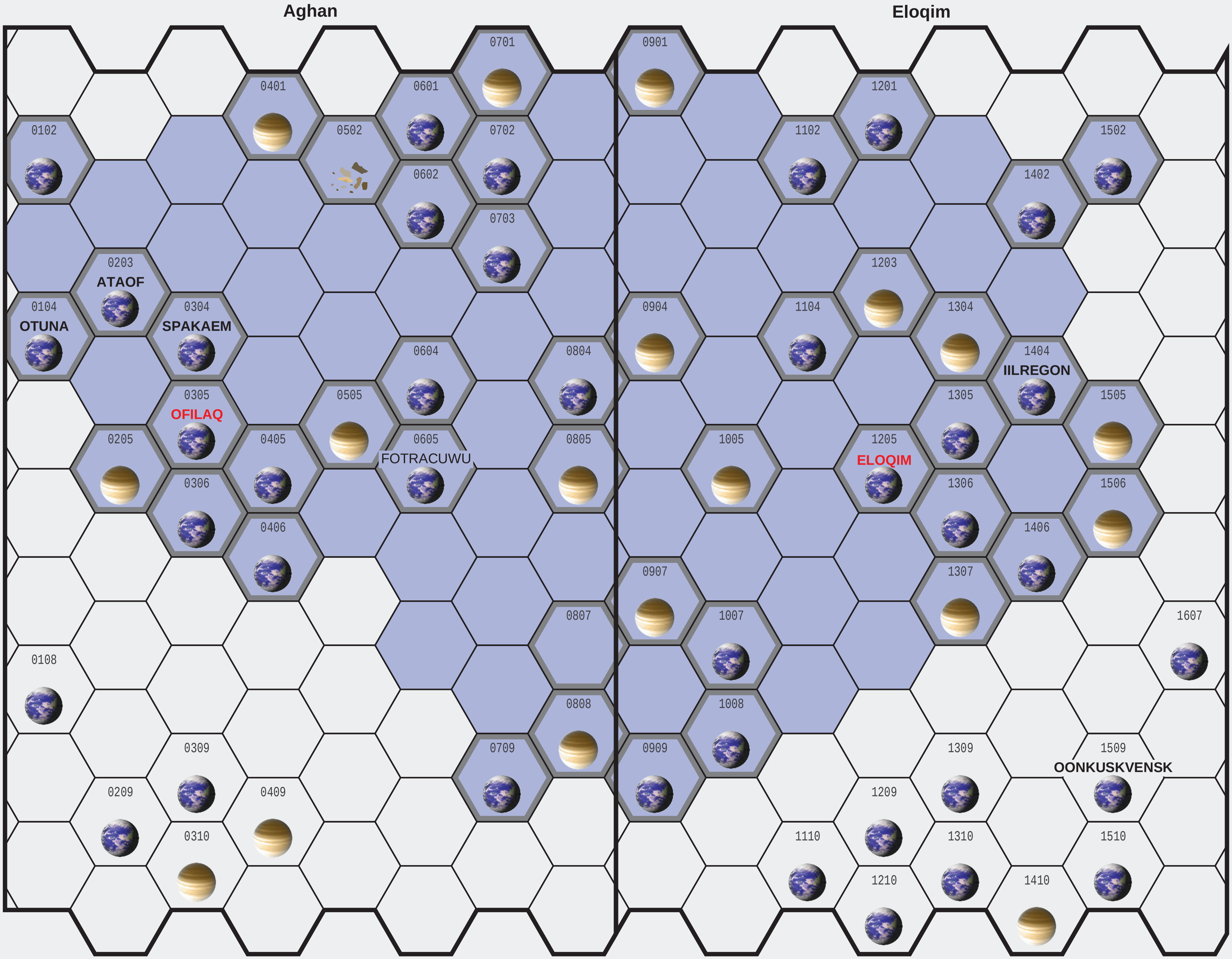
The board represents the 46 member worlds of the Republic. All planets, regardless of population, have two directors in the assembly, selected as they choose. Directors serve terms lasting 10 years. New legislation and amendments to current legislation are debated and voted upon by the board members once the representatives committee have passed them. Those who achieve a majority vote of 75% are presented to the administration for confirmation and ratification. This is mostly a formality but occasionally a chief executive has refused to ratify a new or amended law.

Finally, the administration is a section of the board and consists of the chief executive and the most senior directors drawn from the board. The chief executive is the head of the administration and runs its meetings. Each director in the administration is responsible for a major portfolio within the Republic government, such as defence, finance, internal security, foreign affairs and so on. The number of administration members is variable based on how the chief executive divides the portfolios. The administration votes on proposed and amended legislation to pass into law. This is usually a formality but there have been times when the administration has refused to pass legislation. The chief executive does not vote in the administration except to break ties. The administration can also propose and amend new legislation but it must be submitted to the representative committee for consideration.

Once the administration passes legislation, it is signed by the chief executive and passed into law. The chief executive has the ability to veto any legislation brought to them but this has rarely occurred.

The Republic government has no political parties, so to speak, and the members of the representative committee and the board are considered independent. Naturally, individuals gravitate to others with similar objectives and desires, creating a pseudo-party structure but such parties' nature is fluid and mercurial.

GURVIN INTERSTELLAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC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ATAOF
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OTUNA
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SPAKAEM
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IILREGON
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1410

▨ Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic

Asteroids (no atmosphere/water)

● Planet (dry)

● Planet (water present)

Funding for the government is through taxes. In accordance with the Republic Contract, individuals and businesses cannot be taxed based on their income, as it is seen as a deterrent to financial success. Instead, the government's finances are derived from taxing member worlds based on their population. The tax ensures it does not unduly burden less populated worlds, while heavily populated worlds bear the brunt of the government's finances. How member worlds collect taxes from their citizens is a matter for their governments. Taxes are paid into a public fund used to cover spending and pay those directly employed by the government.

The Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic's primary concern and responsibility is the security of its member worlds. The Republic has no military forces. Instead, the Hive Federation protects the Republic with its own military forces. Individual worlds are permitted to raise their own planetary defences and police forces. Both of these agencies' authorities are restricted to their worlds of origin. The Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic Patrol protects the overall security of the Republic.

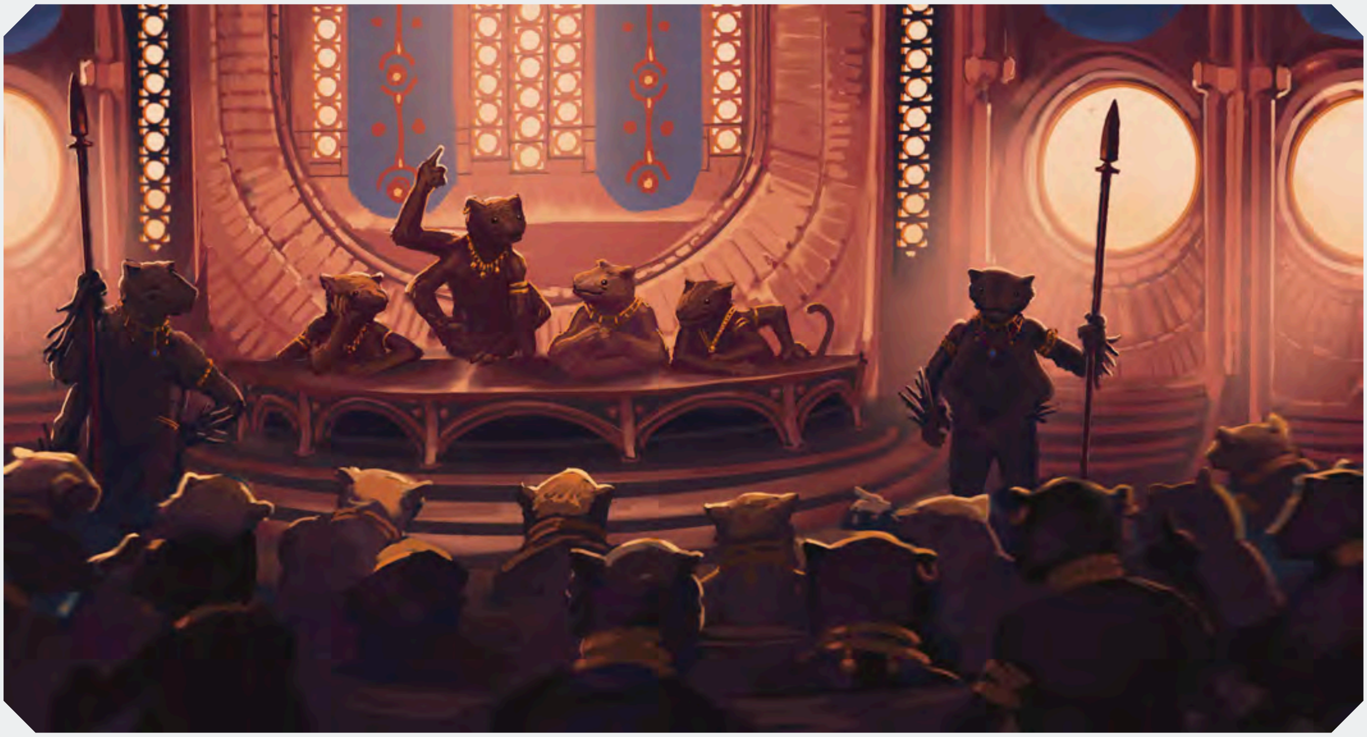
GURVIN INTERSTELLAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC PATROL

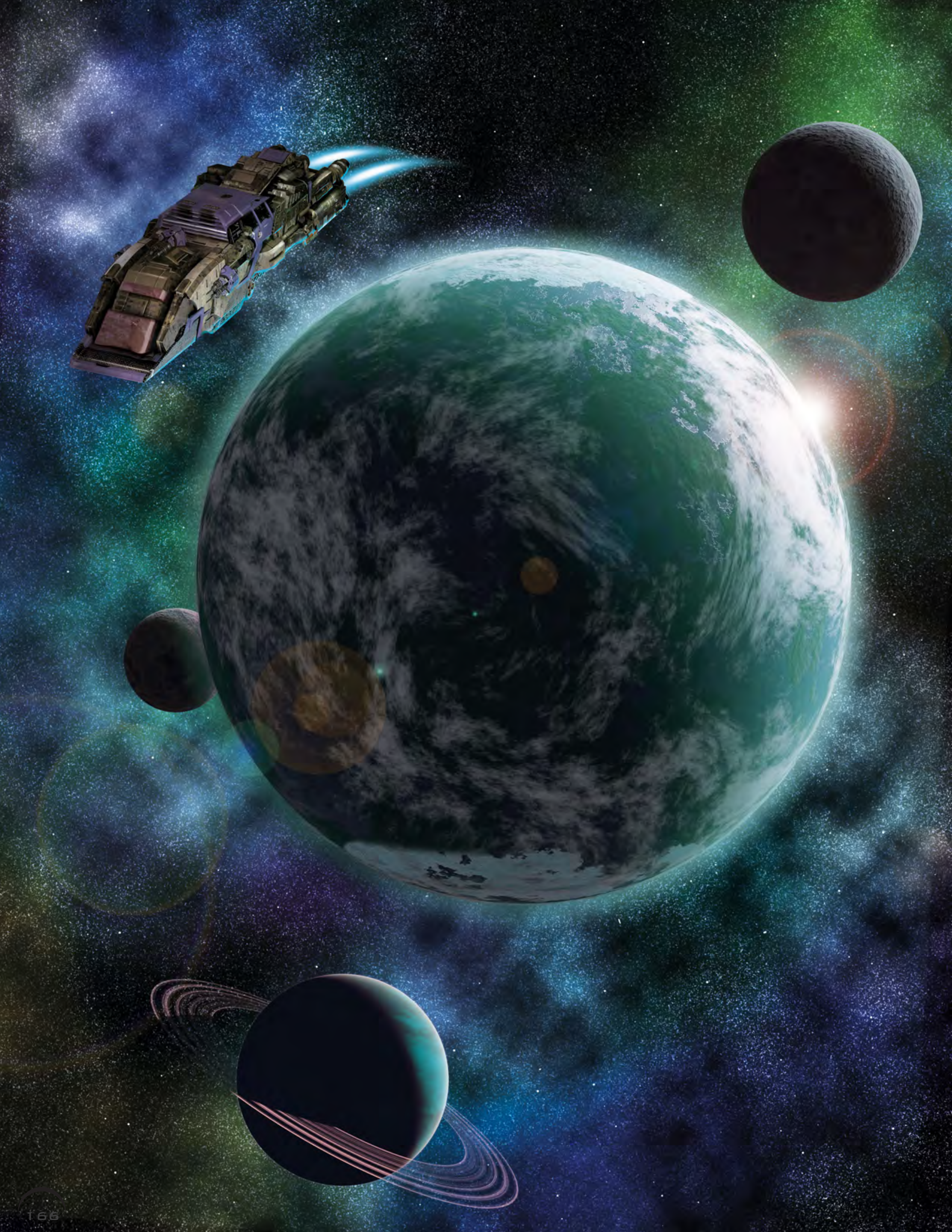
The patrol is not a military force but more akin to a police and intelligence agency. The patrol is divided into a two-part structure. One is the operation command, the agency command, and the other is the support command, the patrol strategic command. The patrol's assets are administered by three forces, which report to the executive commander of the Gurvin Republic Patrol. These forces are the interstellar force, the specialist response force and the external intelligence force.

The interstellar force patrols the Republic's borders and internal trade lanes, enforcing the Republic's interstellar law. Its primary responsibility is to prevent contraband movement and suppress pirate activity. The spacecraft of the patrol force are less than 1,000 tons, with the majority being less than 600 tons.

The specialist response force is an elite force responsible for operations which require expert and unconventional policing methods. The roles carried out by the specialist response force include undercover operations, counter-terrorism, internal intelligence, protection of VIPs and high-risk arrests and searches. The specialist response force has a small fleet of spacecraft, none greater than 800 tons.

The external intelligence force is responsible for intelligence operations outside the borders of the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic. It collects and analyses information in support of law enforcement, Republic security and foreign policy through several means, including espionage and communication interception.





GURVIN TRAVELLERS

Gurvin Travellers follow the same procedures and concepts as human Travellers, as detailed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*.

GURVIN

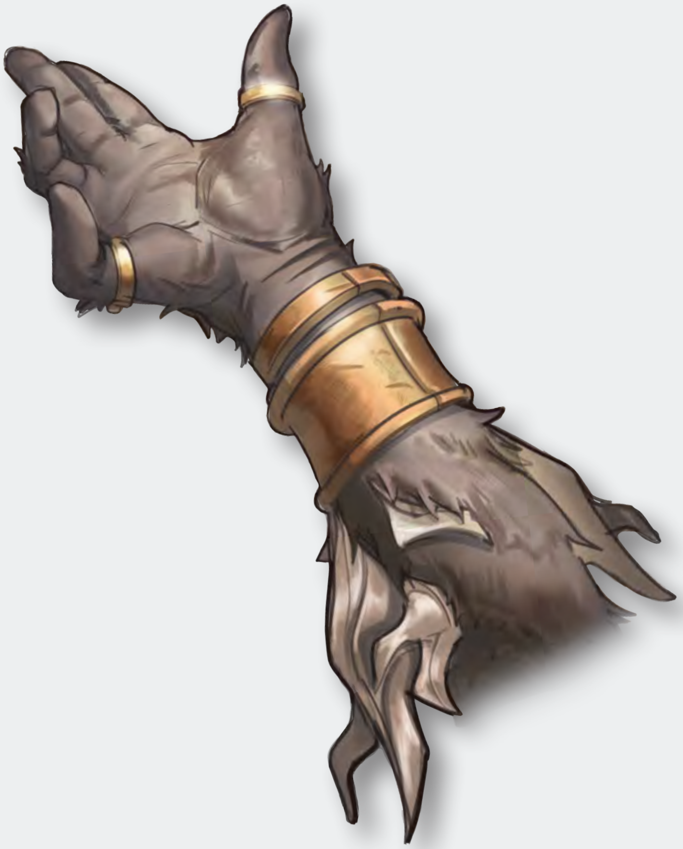
Female Gurvin Travellers have the following modifiers to their characteristics: INT+1, EDU+1.

Male Gurvin Travellers have the following modifiers to the characteristics: STR -1, DEX+1. They also only roll 1D+1 for their INT and EDU characteristics.

GURVIN TRAITS

Gurvin Travellers all possess the following traits:

Arm-Antlers: Male Gurvin possess seasonal sharp antler-like growths on their arms and intermediary limbs, which make nasty, close combat weapons. The antlers use the Melee (natural) skill and do 1D+2 damage. Males who regularly mingle outside Gurvin society trim their arm-antlers so they cannot be used as weapons.



Heightened Senses: Gurvin have a better sense of smell than humans. All Gurvin receive DM+1 to any Recon and Survival checks they have to make based on scent. Gurvin eyes are accustomed to brighter light than humans but their eyesight is worse in darkness and they suffer DM-1 to any check requiring sight in dark conditions.

Extra Limbs: Gurvin have a pair of intermediary limbs which can be used equally well as additional arms or legs. When using used as legs, Gurvin movement increases to eight metres.

TITLES

Gurvin do not have a system of hereditary nobility or anything remotely resembling it. They do not use noble titles within their own society, nor within the greater Hive Federation. If a Gurvin is ever awarded a title from a species or world which uses them, they will adopt the title in situations which warrant it but the title itself will mean nothing to them.

STARTING AGE

Gurvin Travellers being their careers at 16 years of age.

BACKGROUND SKILLS

Female Gurvin gain background skills at level 0 like other sophonts, receiving a number of skills equal to their EDU DM+1. These skills may be chosen from those listed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*, page 8. In addition, all female Gurvin gain the Broker skill.

Male Gurvin gain background skills at level 0 like other female Gurvin, receiving a number of skills equal to their EDU DM+3. These skills may be chosen from those listed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*, page 8.

PRE-CAREER EDUCATION

Gurvin Travellers may use the Pre-Career Education options in the *Traveller Core Rulebook,* page 14, choosing university or military academy. Female Gurvin rarely attend Military Academy.

THE DRAFT

Male Gurvin may submit themselves to the draft like any other Traveller.

CAREERS

Gurvin Travellers use the career generation system as detailed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook* with the following exceptions.

Female Gurvin focus on business endeavours. They tend to favour the following careers: Agent (corporate), Citizen (corporate) and Merchant. Any female Gurvin attempting to qualify for these careers gains DM+2 to the qualification roll and DM +1 to advancement rolls.

They rarely attempt to join Agent (law enforcement or intelligence), Army, Marine or Navy careers. They suffer DM-2 to qualification and DM-1 to advancement rolls in these careers, although they gain DM+1 for commission rolls.

Male Gurvin tend to favour the Agent (law enforcement), Army, Entertainer (performer), Marine and Navy careers. They gain DM+2 to their qualification rolls but suffer DM-2 to Commission rolls. Male Gurvin are more likely to be found in planetary militias than the Hive Federation navy.

Gurvin rarely choose the Rogue career. If they do, they suffer DM-4 to qualification and advancement rolls.

AGEING

Gurvin ageing rolls commence at the age of 32 (at the end of their fourth term). Female Gurvin gain DM+1 to ageing rolls. Male Gurvin suffer DM-1 to ageing rolls.

MUSTERING OUT

Gurvin Travellers use the mustering out system as detailed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook.*

ROLEPLAYING GURVIN

Roleplaying Gurvin alters depending on the gender of the Traveller. Female Gurvin are strongly motivated to gain wealth to an obsessive level. Every action they take, every decision they make, will be focused through a lens of increasing her wealth.

Despite this obsession, Gurvin females will rarely, if ever, stoop to illegal methods to gain their wealth. They may be shrewd and cunning businesswomen but they will rarely ever resort to criminal activity to reach their goals. Their actions may be sneaky and underhanded but they will be completely legal and withstand the scrutiny of a court of law.

Female Gurvin are very concerned with exhibitions of wealth. They need others to know they are wealthy, proving it with elaborate displays throughout their homes and offices. They will wear copious amounts of jewellery and expensive garments, and wealthy females will often have several husbands whom she will also festoon with jewellery and fine garments. She will parade her husbands about and have them attend her as escorts and entertainers.

Gurvin females will not display their wealth through charity. Instead, they use extravagant displays to show their wealth. Business meetings will be accompanied by fine wine and rare delicacies. Contract signings will be accompanied by a party with local businesspeople invited to witness the signing. A successful business coup will be celebrated with a lavish banquet.

Male Gurvin are not motivated by money. Instead, they are motivated by attracting the attention of female Gurvin. Males used to aggressively contend for female attention through physical combat. Hiver squeamishness has channelled such aggression into the use of dance, acrobatics and display to vie for female Gurvin attention. Even when married, males do not stop trying to impress females but their attentions will be focused primarily on their wives as opposed to others.

HIGH GUARD OF THE GURVIN

Gurvin produce a small number of vessels of their own design for their own use. The majority of Gurvin vessels are used for commercial freight or trading. Gurvin commercial vessels can be found across the Hive Federation and beyond. It is not unusual to find a Gurvin trader far beyond the Hive Federation borders in the Solomani Confederation, or the unaligned sectors to trailing of the Third Imperium.

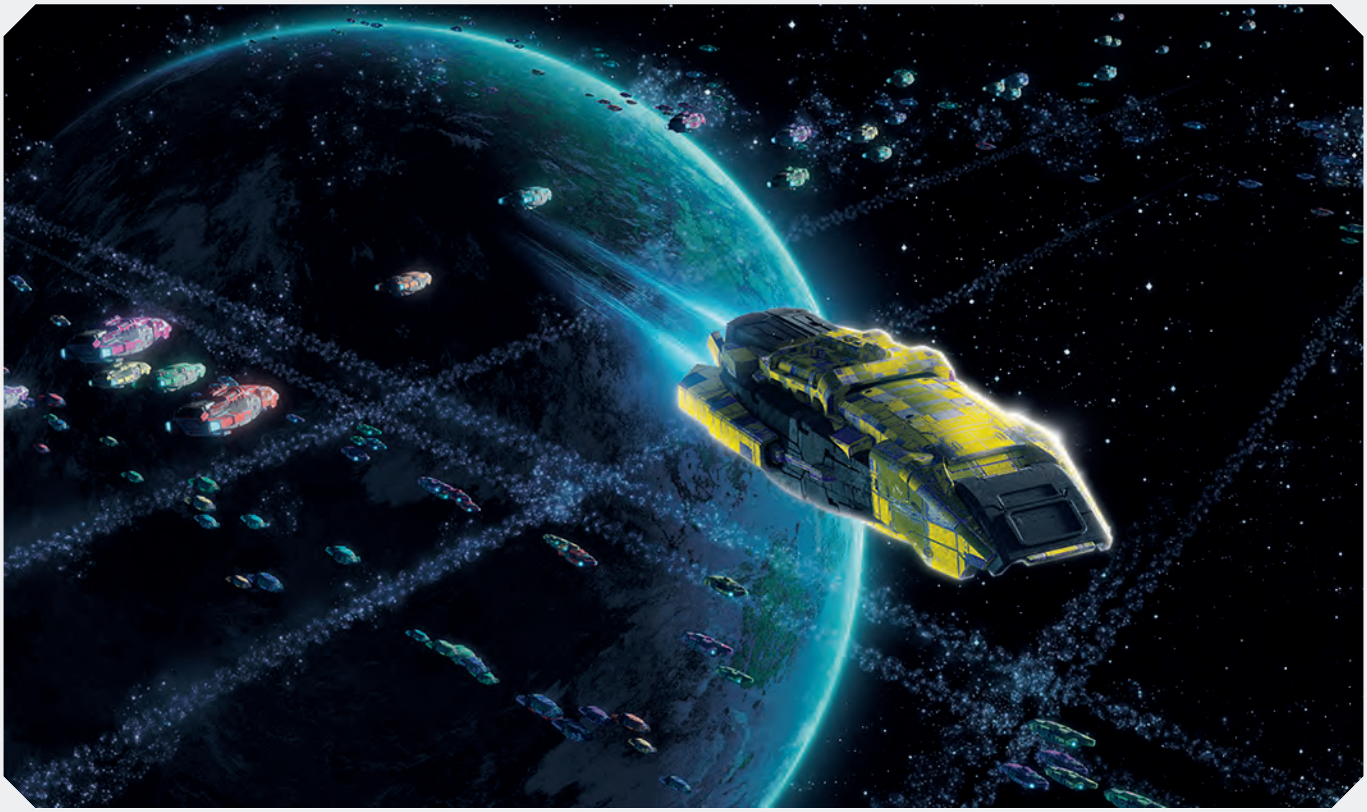
A small number of military vessels destined for the navy are also constructed. These vessels are rarely seen beyond the borders of the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic unless they are operating in conjunction with Hive Federation vessels.

Gurvin spacecraft are similar to those of many other species, with similar functions. One aspect of Gurvin vessels which stands out is their stateroom configurations. As Gurvin prefer to sleep communally, staterooms intended solely for Gurvin use are normally combined into communal staterooms situated off the side of a common area. Many vessels will also have another stateroom away from the communal stateroom designated as a maternity stateroom where pregnant Gurvin may deliver their young in private away from any male Gurvin on the ship.

Staterooms intended for passengers other than Gurvin are not combined into communal staterooms. Many ships provide stateroom facilities which would suit many of the species found in the Hive Federation.

Externally, Gurvin ships resemble Hiver vessels, sharing a similar box-like aesthetic. Internally, they can differ significantly based on the desires of the manufacturer and target clientele.

While Gurvin naval architects provide for the installation of turrets in most of their designs, apart from military ships, the species rarely install weapons in the turrets when the ships are intended for use within the Gurvin Republic or Hive Federation. Those travelling beyond the borders of the Hive Federation will often be armed for self-defence only.



TRADE SCOUT

CLASS: NAWRYNE

The *Nawryne*-class trade scout is often used to scout out new markets. They can be found as part of larger Gurvin trade fleets or operated as an individual concern. A single female Gurvin can crew trade scouts but the vessels also have facilities for a small family group.

The ship possesses significant range with the jump-3 drive, allowing it to roam far beyond trade mains in search of new markets. The cargo hold has the capacity to carry nearly 40 tons of cargo, which is quite significant for a vessel of this size.

TL13		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	150 tons, Streamlined	—	9
M-Drive	Thrust 1	1.5	3
J-Drive	Jump 3 (size reduction)	14.67	26.818
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12, size reduction), Power 105	6.3	7.7
Fuel Tanks	J-3, 8 weeks operation	47	—
Bridge		10	1
Computer	Computer/10bis	—	0.24
Sensors	Civilian	1	3
Weapons	Double Turret (empty)	1	0.5
Systems	Docking Space	4.4	1
	Air/Raft	—	0.25
	Fuel Scoops	—	—
	Fuel Processor (80 tons/day)	4	0.2
Staterooms	Standard x4	16.4	2
Software	Jump Control/3	—	0.3
	Intellect	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		39	—
Common Areas		4	0.4
Total: MCr55.408			

Crew

Pilot, Astrogator, Engineer

Hull: 60

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr4617/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr55.408

Power Requirements

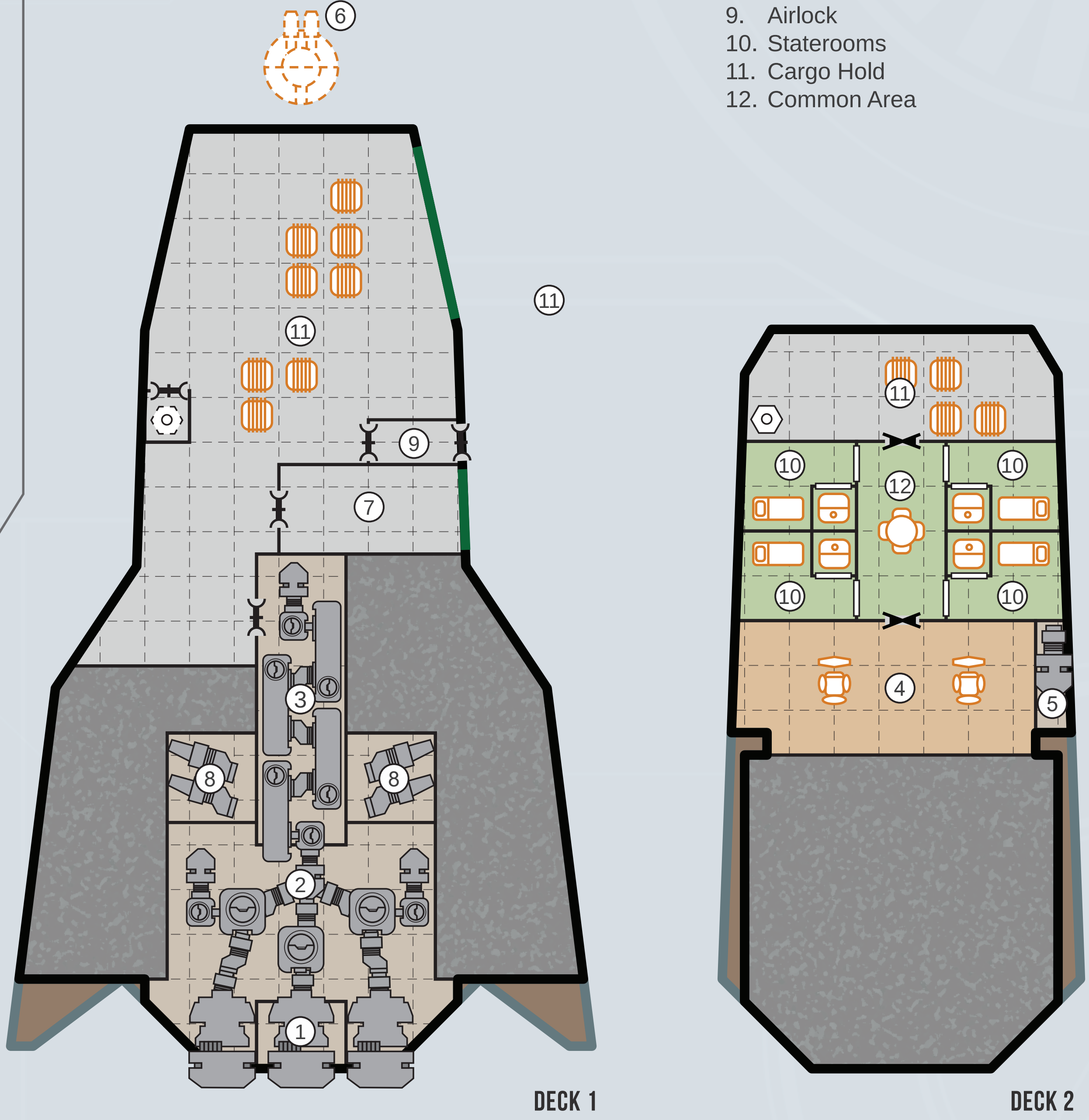
Basic Ship Systems	30
Manoeuvre Drive	15
Jump Drive	45
Sensors	1
Fuel Processor	4

Nawryne-class Trade Scout

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Double Turret
7. Docking Space
8. Fuel Processor
9. Airlock
10. Staterooms
11. Cargo Hold
12. Common Area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DECK 1
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DECK 2

FAMILY TRADER

CLASS: LUAXWRAUA

The *Luaxwraua*-class family trader is as common in the Hive Federation as free traders are in the Third Imperium. The vessel is, as the name suggests, normally crewed by a family of Gurvin.

Normally, three of the vessel's staterooms are combined into a communal stateroom for the family to sleep in. Another stateroom is set aside as maternity quarters for a female. The remaining four staterooms are designed for passengers, containing either single or double bunks.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	300 tons, Streamlined	—	9
M-Drive	Thrust 2	6	12
J-Drive	Jump 2	20	30
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 195	13	13
Fuel Tanks	J-2, 8 weeks operation	63.3	—
Bridge		20	1.5
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Civilian	1	3
Weapons	Double Turrets x2	2	1
Craft	Docking Space	4.4	1
	Air/Raft	—	0.25
Systems	Fuel Scoops	—	—
	Fuel Processor (60 tons/day)	3	0.15
	Loading Belt	1	0.01
Staterooms	Standard x8	32	4
Software	Jump Control/2	—	0.2
	Intellect	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Common Areas		8	0.8
Cargo		126	—
	Total: MCr76.07		

Crew

Pilot, Astrogator, Engineer, Medic, Steward

Hull: 120

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

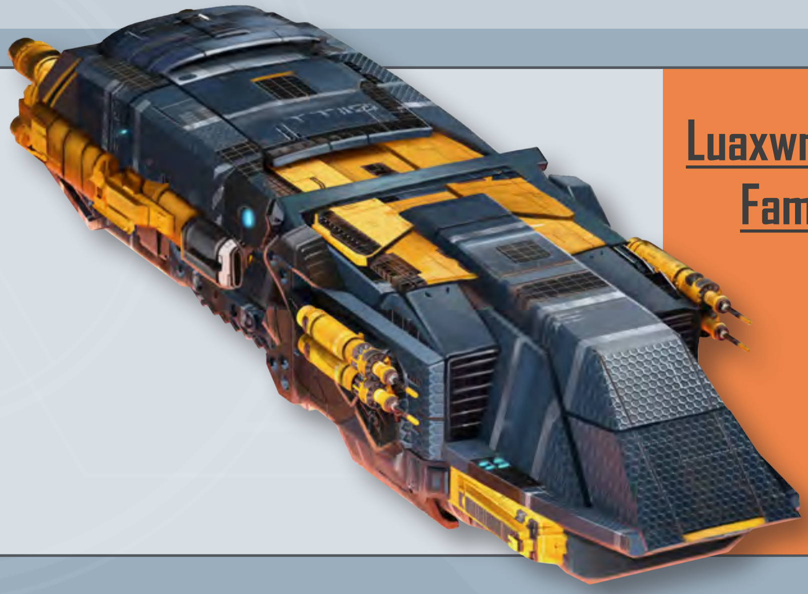
Cr6339/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr76.07

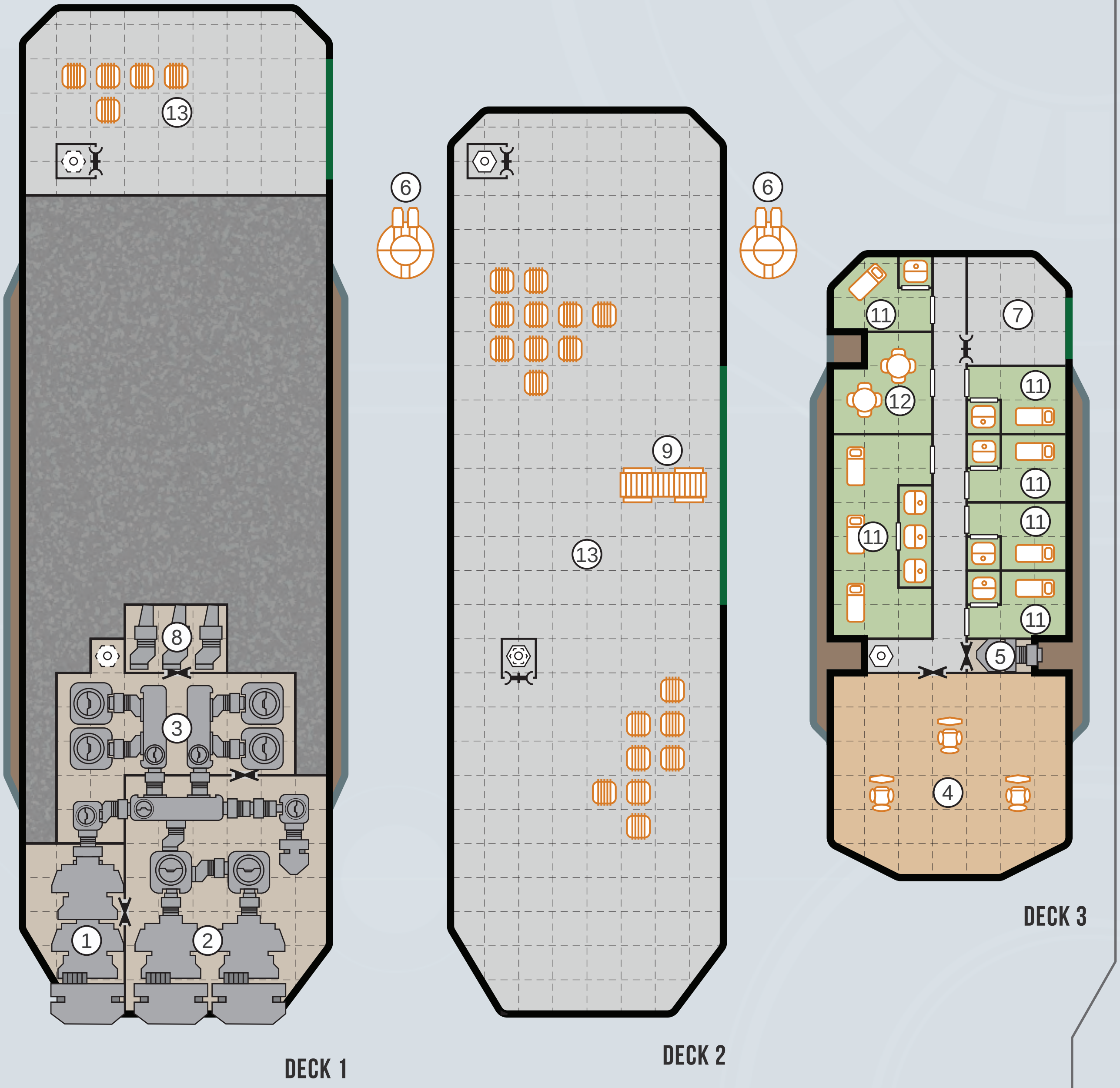
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	60
Manoeuvre Drive	60
Jump Drive	60
Sensors	1
Fuel Processor	3



Luaxwraua-class Family Trader

1 square = 0.5 Ton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DECK 1
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DECK 3

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Double Turret
7. Docking Space
8. Fuel Processor
9. Loading Belt
10. Airlock
11. Stateroom
12. Common Area
13. Cargo Hold

MERCHANTMAN

CLASS: ETRUSKAUAE

The *Etruskauae* is either owned and operated by larger companies or subsidised by a corporation for the use of independent traders who ply their predetermined trade routes. The vessel has significant versatility and can be outfitted in various configurations to suit its intended purpose. The example provided here is standard, with the capacity to carry a significant amount of cargo and provide both low berths and staterooms for passengers.

Four of the staterooms are combined into a communal room and a single stateroom is set aside for maternity use. The rest of the staterooms are designed for the use of individual passengers. Crew quarters are separate from passenger areas for increased ship security.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	600 tons, Streamlined	—	36
M-Drive	Thrust 2	12	24
J-Drive	Jump 2	35	52.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 390	26	26
Fuel Tanks	J-2, 4 weeks operation	125.6	—
Bridge		20	3
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Civilian	1	3
Weapons	Double Turrets x3	3	1.5
Craft	Docking Space	8.8	2
	Air/Rafts x2	—	0.5
Systems	Cargo Crane	6	6
	Fuel Scoops	—	—
	Fuel Processor (120 tons/day)	6	0.3
	Medical Bay	4	2
Staterooms	Standard x16	64	8
	Low Berths x20	10	1
Software	Jump Control/2	—	0.2
	Intellect	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Common Areas		16	1.6
Cargo		262	—
Total: MCr167.76			

Crew

Pilot, Astrogator, Engineers x2, Maintenance, Medic, Steward

Hull: 240

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr13980/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr167.76

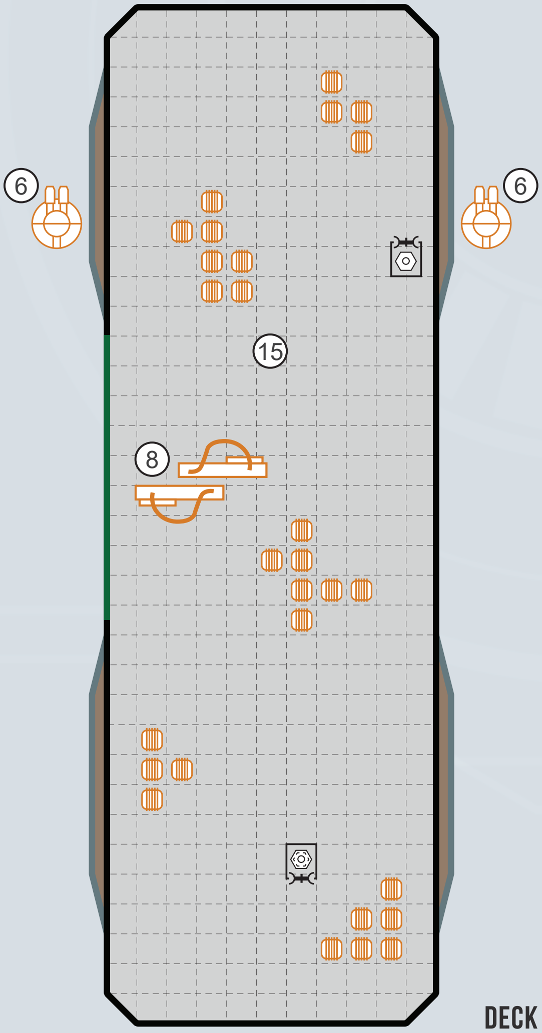
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	120
Manoeuvre Drive	120
Jump Drive	120
Sensors	1
Fuel Processor	6

Etruskauae-class Merchantman

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Double Turret
7. Docking Space
8. Cargo Crane
9. Fuel Processor
10. Airlock
11. Medical Bay
12. Stateroom
13. Low Berths
14. Common Areas
15. Cargo Hold



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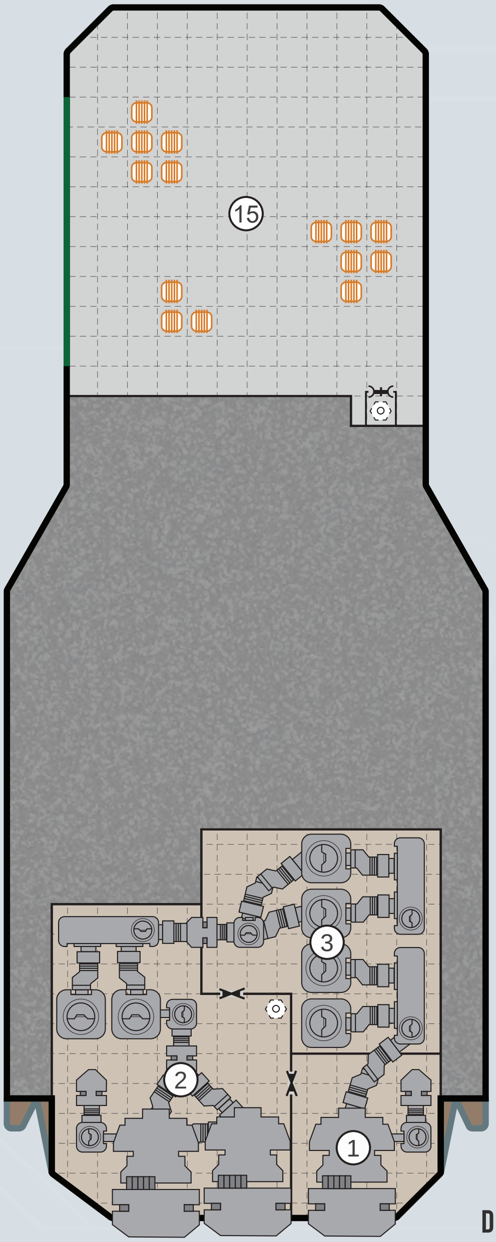

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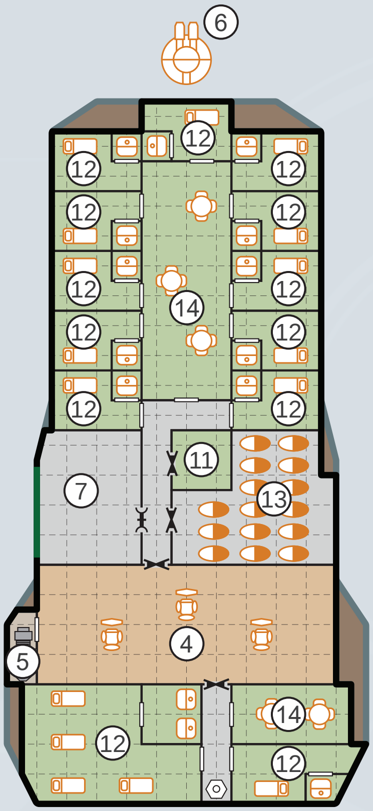
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DECK 3

1 square = 0.5 Ton

SMALL FREIGHTER

CLASS: NOAU

The *Noau*-class is a common sight within the Hive Federation, carrying cargo along fixed trade routes. While streamlined and able to land on any planet, the freighter also carries two slow pinnaces outfitted purely as cargo-carrying small craft. The pinnaces can be used to deliver small cargo to downports while the freighter remains in orbit, or to transfer cargo from one vessel to another.

The staterooms are combined into two communal sleeping rooms with two staterooms set aside for maternity use. The freighter has no capacity to take on passengers and is intended solely to transport cargo.

Fitted with jump-3, the Noau is able to make a number of shorter jumps without refuelling, or make a longer jump across mains to star systems where less capable starships can reach.

The *Noau* is not intended to see much use beyond the borders of the Hive Federation but the standard fitting includes five empty turrets. Weapons can be installed in the turrets as necessary, turning the freighter into a serviceable military auxiliary for both the Gurvin Interstellar Democratic Republic and the Hive Federation navies.

TL13		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	3,000 tons, Streamlined, Light	—	135
M-Drive	Thrust 2 (size reduction)	54	132
J-Drive	Jump 3 (size reduction)	207	379.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12, size reduction), Power 2,160	129.6	158.4
Fuel Tanks	J-3, 4 weeks operation	915	—
Bridge		60	15
Computer	Computer/10bis	—	0.24
Sensors	Civilian	1	3
Weapons	Double Turrets x5	5	2.5
Craft	Docking Space	88	20
	Slow Pinnaces x2	—	14.454
Systems	Cargo Crane	30	30
	Fuel Scoops	—	—
	Fuel Processor (920 tons/day)	46	2.3
Staterooms	Standard x12	48	6
Software	Jump Control/3	—	0.3
	Intellect	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Common Areas		12	1.2
Cargo		1,400	—
Total: MCr899.894			

Crew

Pilot, Astrogator, Engineers x12, Maintenance x3, Administrators x2

Hull: 1,080

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr74991/month

PURCHASE COST

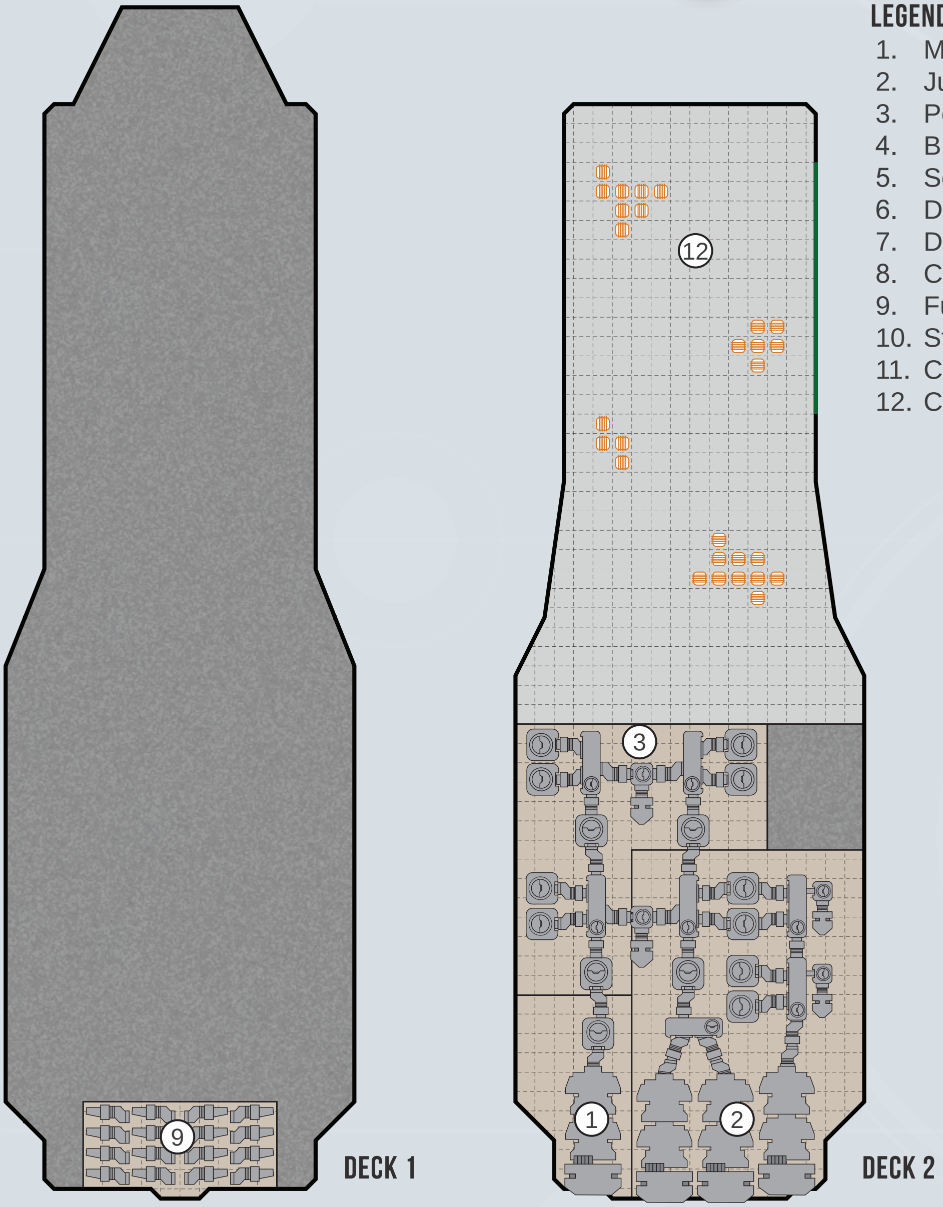
MCr899.894

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	600
Manoeuvre Drive	600
Jump Drive	600
Sensors	1
Fuel Processor	46

Noau-class Small Freighter

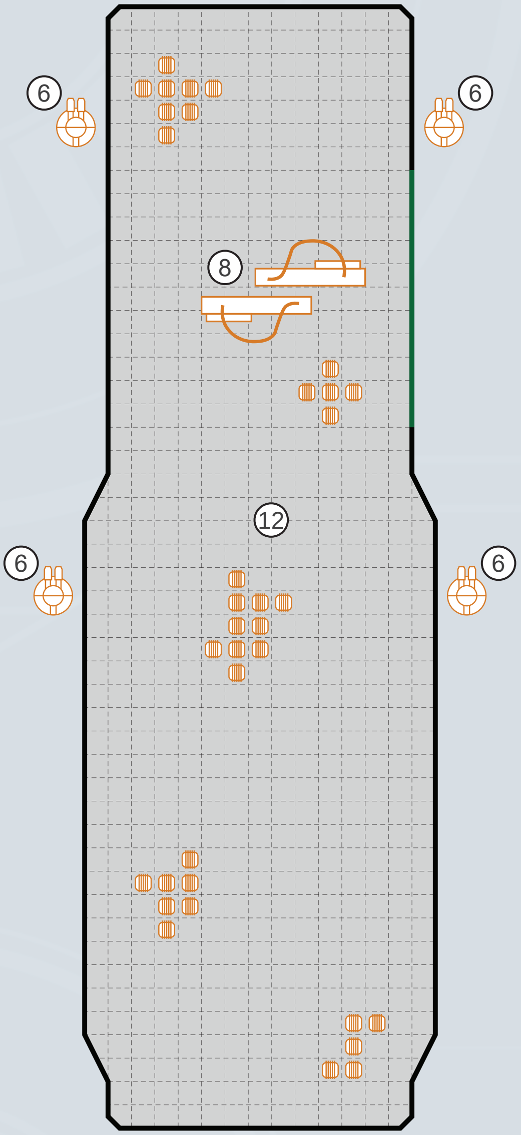
1 square = 1 Ton



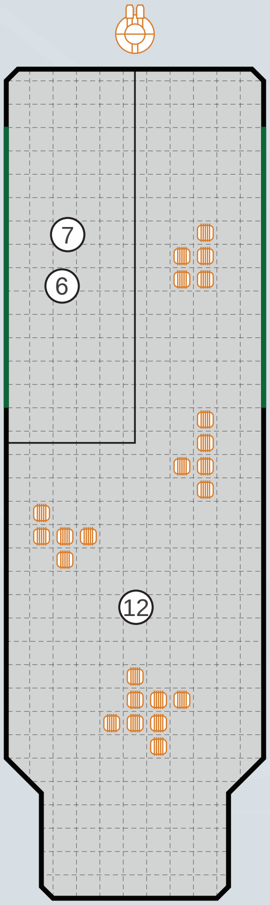
LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Double Turret
7. Docking Space
8. Cargo Crane
9. Fuel Processor
10. Staterooms
11. Common Area
12. Cargo Hold

1 square = 1 Ton



DECK 3



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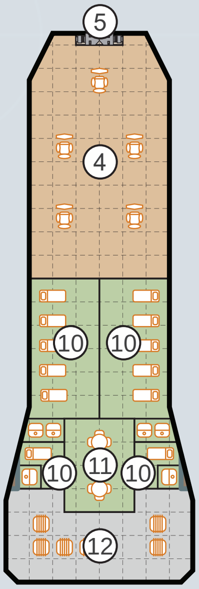
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DECK 5

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Double Turret
7. Docking Space
8. Cargo Crane
9. Fuel Processor
10. Staterooms
11. Common Area
12. Cargo Hold

THE TEZCAT

Tezcat – scientifically termed *xenofelis aumrharis sapiens* – are relative newcomers to the galactic stage. Residing in the sparsely populated Great Rift, they are predatory nihilists shaped by religious fanaticism. Forced into accepting the existence of aliens, they struggle to come to terms with their new outlook. Viewing the universe as filled with monsters, they launched an unsuccessful interstellar jihad to eradicate them.

PHYSIOLOGY

Tezcat are a humanoid species. Proto-Tezcat evolved from social forest-dwelling predators who used their fast-changing colour skin, sharp claws and venomous bite to aid in hunting. While Tezcat are wickedly armed compared to Humaniti, they are significantly underequipped compared to other species on their planet. This evolutionary discrepancy led to the development of greater intelligence in proto-Tezcat. Further adaptions include a bipedal stance to get a better view of the environment freeing up their forelimbs to carry objects such as rocks and sticks to use as tools and weapons. Weapon use led to the evolution of greater intelligence and significantly increased their chances of survival.

Tezcat are humanoid in form with a head, two arms, two legs and a long and flexible tail. They average 170 centimetres in height and weigh about 65 kilograms. They have an ectomorphic body type, exhibiting narrow shoulders and hips compared to their size. There is minimal sexual dimorphism between the sexes. Females have six small breasts in two rows, starting somewhat lower and further apart on the ribcage than human females and continuing down to the belly. The breasts remain small unless a female is lactating.

Tezcat have smooth hairless skin, which has a texture like suede and is naturally a silvery-grey colour with an iridescent sheen. The skin can rapidly change colour, acting as camouflage to blend into their surroundings instinctively. This ability is possible due to thousands of chromatophore-analogue cells beneath the skin. Each chromatophore cell is filled with either red, orange, brown, yellow or black pigments, and by contracting or extending the sacs, they can rapidly change the brightness and intensity of these colours.

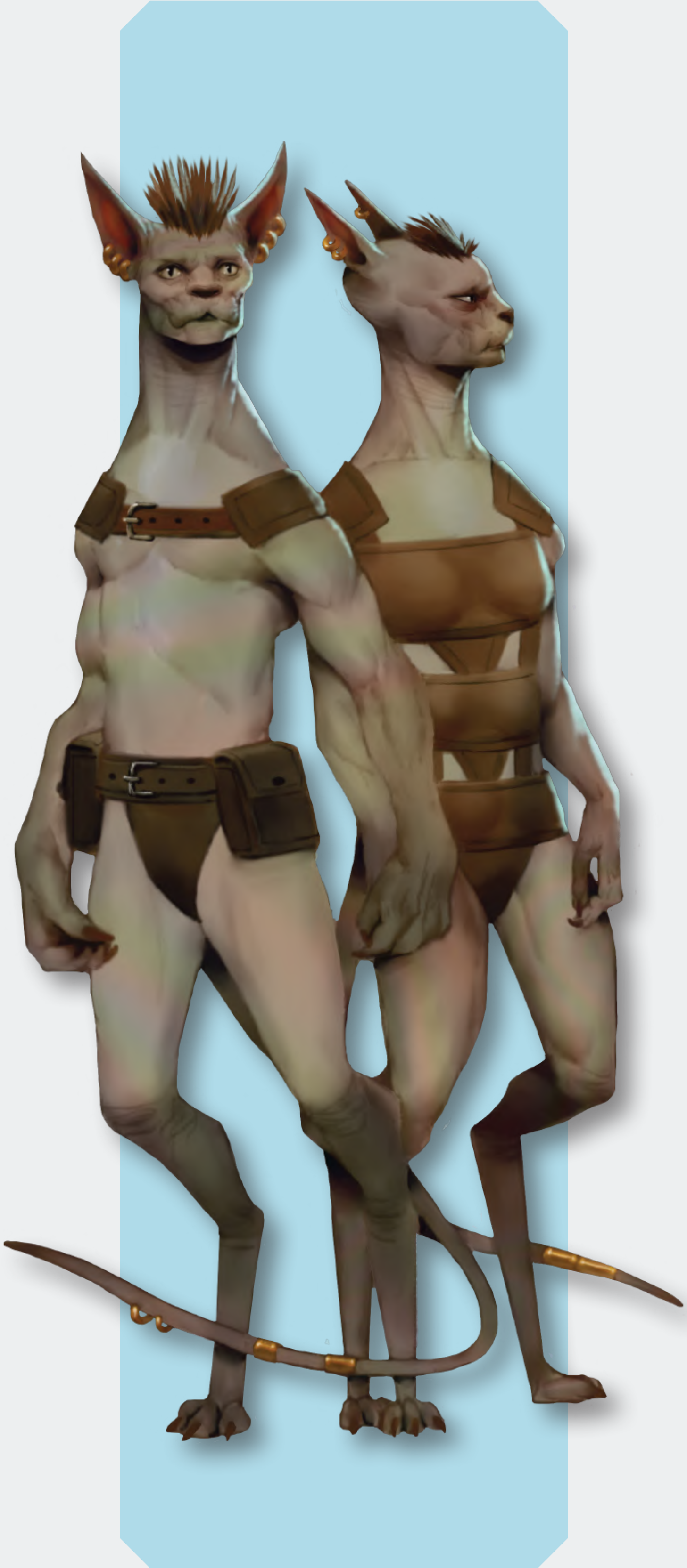
Although they do not possess any hair or fur, Tezcat grow a shock of dark quills from the tops of their heads. The quills reach lengths of approximately five centimetres in length but Tezcat often cut and style the quills to suit their tastes or requirements. Quills grow around one centimetre per week if untended.

Tezcat are endothermic – able to maintain their body temperature through metabolic processing. Their fast metabolism prevents them from gaining weight quickly, requiring them to consume twice as many calories as a Solomani or Vilani of similar stature.

Tezcat possess closed respiratory and cardiovascular systems. They inspire oxygen and expire carbon dioxide. Their blood uses coboglobin in corpuscles to transport oxygen through the body, making the blood colourless with a faint pink tinge when oxygenated but taking on a dark yellow colour in the veins. Coboglobin has a much shorter efficacy period than haemoglobin – hours as opposed to days – causing a dramatic colour change from amber to deep pink when it loses its ability to carry oxygen. Due to Tezcat accelerated metabolism, they can manufacture coboglobin in adequate amounts so as not to cause any issues.

Tezcat have an internal skeleton composed of calcium carbonate in a chitin and protein matrix. The skeleton provides internal structural support for the body and performs several vital metabolic processes. The long bones of the limbs contain a marrow analogue with the two primary functions of manufacturing blood corpuscles and antibodies. All bones also function as a storage system for calcium released for muscular contraction.

An incredibly flexible spine is situated dorsally. The spine comprises 39 vertebrae – nine cervical, 16 thoracic, nine lumber and five sacral. Each vertebra possesses a ventral channel through which the spinal cord extends, providing excellent protection to the nerve tissue. From the spine extends the shoulder and leg girdles, the ribcage and the tail.



The tail is an extension of the spine composed of 36 vertebrae, making it long and highly flexible but not prehensile. The tail maintains balance, especially when running or traversing unstable ground and imparts general emotional states such as anger, annoyance, curiosity and submission.

The ribcage consists of 16 paired ribs. The Tezcat do not possess a sternum. The ribs are not directly connected to the spine; connective cartilage supports the ribs from the spine along the dorsal side and to each other on the ventral side. Tezcat possess clavicle analogies but unlike many humanoids, they are free floating for flexibility. Protected within the ribcage are several vital organs.

The heart lies centrally within the ribcage, close to the spinal cord. The heart consists of eight chambers which are arranged in a row. Each chamber is powered by separate sets of muscles providing a built-in redundancy in case one or several fail. Each chamber beats in succession with 130 beats per minute when the Tezcat is at rest and up to 260 beats per minute under exertion. Blood is pumped out through the top of the heart through two large arteries to the lungs, where oxygen is taken up and carbon dioxide is released, then to the rest of the body via an arterial system to deliver oxygen to the cells. A venal system returns deoxygenated blood to the bottom of the heart.

Surrounding the heart, except dorsally, are the four lungs. Each lung is a spongy organ comprising four separate lobes and is densely packed with alveoli. Each lung is surrounded by an individual muscle which contracts and expands to produce inhalation. Air is inhaled into the lungs through the bronchi via the trachea and nose. Each lunch can operate independently if necessary. When at rest, Tezcat commonly only utilise two lungs and recruit the other two under exertion.

Also located in the ribcage, below the lungs, are three organs which remove toxins from the blood, act as a blood reservoir and assist the body in fighting infection. The functions of these organs are like the kidneys and spleen found in Humaniti.

The shoulder girdle extends outward from the top of the ribcage from which the upper limbs are connected. The shoulder girdle is flexible enough to bring the shoulders into physical contact in front of the body.

The forelimbs consist of a major and minor upper arm bone and a major and minor lower arm bone each. The major upper arm bone contains a ball which fits into a matching socket in the shoulder girdle. The minor bones lie beside the major ones and assist in the rotation of the limb. The shoulder joint is highly flexible and protected by a muscle and connective tissue capsule to provide support and movement.

The lower limbs comprise similar bones as those found in the upper limbs and are connected to the spine via a structure remarkably like the shoulder girdle and similarly connected to the lower limbs. The lower limbs are digitigrade, with Tezcat walking on their toes. The lower limbs are more heavily muscled than the upper limbs, a holdover from when Proto-Tezcat were quadrupeds and the hindlimbs provided most of the motive force for explosive movement.

Tezcat hands and feet are similar in structure. The palm and body of the foot are elongated and possess vestigial pads. Four-toed front paws have evolved into three nimble fingers and toes ending in sharp claws. The thumb, also ending in a sharp claw, is located far back on the hand, near the complex wrist joint. Tezcat hands are remarkably dexterous. They can remove the skin of a grape with a single claw without damaging the flesh below.

The fourth toe on the foot is vestigial and in most Tezcat is only a small, dewclaw-like extremity located near but not connected to the ankle joint. The positioning of the dewclaw exposes it to accidents and many parents have their children's dewclaws surgically removed shortly after birth.

The skull is connected to the body via a longish neck and is attached to the spine via a complex joint, giving excellent freedom of movement. The skull is long with small mandibles. The ocular sockets are large and deep set to protect the eyes. Aural openings are located high up on either side of the skull.

The brain is located under a thick layer of bone in the skull behind and above the eyes. The brain consists of a single lobe which is heavily folded. The brain's ocular portion is highly developed and conditioned to respond to movement. The brain comprises four parts, three corresponding to and having the same functions as the forebrain, midbrain and hindbrain found in Humaniti, with the addition of the sub brain located below the forebrain. The sub brain, an extension of the hindbrain, is primarily responsible for controlling Tezcat camouflage ability. Damage to this part of the brain can reduce or remove their ability to change the colour of their skin.

In the upper and lower jaws, Tezcat have venom glands which produce a neurotoxin which can kill a rabbit-sized animal in moments but will only make a healthy adult human ill. The glands connect the teeth, and the venom is delivered through a bite. Tezcat teeth are composed of skeletal tissue covered in hard mineralised enamel. The teeth are long and pointed, designed to penetrate flesh deeply and tear off large chunks which are not chewed but swallowed whole. The teeth also possess a hollow groove or channel on the dorsal surface through which venom is pumped. Tezcat continually grow teeth throughout their lives, replacing those lost, broken or worn out.

The tongue is only capable of minimal movement and does not contribute meaningfully to the formation of words. A short nub-like tongue projects from the mouth's roof, with tastebuds that can detect a broad range of flavours, although their sense of taste is no more sensitive than humans.

Tezcat have large eyes with slitted pupils. Muscles around the pupils can contract and dilate the pupils significantly, controlling the amount of light which can enter the eye. This allows the pupils to open very large to let in the maximum light possible at night or very small in bright light. Tezcat require some light to see, no matter how dim. Their sense of sight is slightly inferior to that of a human in daylight but more acute at night. Tezcat can see colour but their range limits them to yellow-blue dichromatic vision. They are very good at distinguishing between blues, yellow, black and white variations but cannot see red or green very well. This deficiency does not affect their ability to mimic those colours with their chameleon ability.

The ears are long and narrow, extending from the side and the top of the head. They are composed of flexible chitin and are covered in the skin. The ears are highly flexible and capable of independent movement. While the ears are large, the Tezcat sense of hearing is only slightly superior to human hearing, able to detect sounds in the same decibel range.

The nose is small and surprisingly cat-like in appearance. It has two nostrils which lead to a large nasal cavity and then to the mouth and the trachea. The nostrils and nasal cavity possess millions of cells capable of detecting scent, giving them a sense of smell slightly superior to the human sense.

Tezcat possess a larynx-like organ located low on the trachea and can generate a narrow range of low throaty growls to high-pitched screeches. Communication is composed of a variety of hisses and growls accompanied by changes in skin colour. Tezcat can produce both whispers and loud booming roars.

The throat splits into the trachea and oesophagus at the back of the mouth, with the oesophagus leading to the stomach, which contains strong digestive fluids where digestion begins. The stomach leads to a short intestinal tract which combines the functions of the large and small intestines and the liver. Food passes quickly through the digestive system where nutrients are absorbed. Indigestible material and waste are passed into a colon-analogue located in the base of the tail and then eliminated through a cloaca. Tezcat do not have a bladder and do not urinate. Instead, all waste products collected from the blood are passed to the colon analogue and illuminated collectively as semi-solid waste.

Tezcat have two genders which correspond to male and female. The genitalia of both sexes are internal. Both males and females possess pseudo-phallus organs extending from the cloaca when aroused. Mating is performed externally by entwining the pseudo-phalluses together while the male excretes gametes are absorbed by the female pseudo-phallus through the skin. The male's gametes travel up into the female's reproductive system to fertilise her gametes.

Female Tezcat come into oestrus approximately every 160 days, releasing between one and ten gametes into their reproductive systems. The gametes remain fertile for about seven days, during which period if mating occurs there is a high chance of conception. It is not unusual for female Tezcat to have multiple intimate partners, so the young could have different fathers if pregnancy occurs.

If fertilised by male gametes, the zygotes lodge in a cylinder-shaped uterus. A placenta for each embryo connects to the uterus wall to supply oxygen but not nutrition. Instead, each embryo has a yolk sack from which it draws nutrients during gestation and up to a week after birth. Pregnancy lasts only three Imperial months. Not all fertilised gametes successfully develop but births typically comprise between one and six young. Younger females tend to have smaller litters, with the number in each litter increasing as she grows older. The mother's body reabsorbs unsuccessful gametes.

LIFESPAN

Tezcat young are born with their eyes and ears closed. They are completely helpless and are reliant on their parents. The young are nursed by their mother with a milk analogue produced in her breasts and excreted directly through the skin, where they lick it off. Newborns cannot walk but wriggle around on their stomachs within minutes of birth. By two months of age, their eyes open but they cannot see clearly for another month. By three months, their ear canals are fully open and they have clear hearing.

By four months of age, young can eliminate bodily waste independently. Before this they must rely on their parents to stimulate them to excrete waste. Their teeth will also begin erupting through their gums. By six months, they can crawl independently, explore their surroundings and interact with their siblings. They can also start consuming solids partially digested by their mother and regurgitated for them.

At eight months, the young begin walking upright and can eat independently without assistance. They start speaking their first words and can string together simple sentences within the year.

At four years of age, Tezcat young are old enough to begin education. Initial instruction is undertaken in the home, where the young are taught the fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic by their parents. Home education continues for two years; when they are six, they begin formal schooling.

Formal academic education generally continues until the young are 17 years old, although there are provisions for young to leave their academic education for vocational education at the age of 15. On graduation at 17, young are considered adults and can enter the workforce or continue with advanced education. Young can leave the family home at this age but it is not unusual for young to remain with their parents for several more years.

Tezcat are in the prime of their lives from 20 to 45. After the age of 45, signs of ageing increase and include conditions such as arthritis, heart disease, bone density loss and the reduced production of sex hormones. Between the ages of 45 and 55, male and female Tezcat become infertile although there are medical techniques to induce pregnancy artificially.

By the age of 70, Tezcat are considered geriatrics. Age-related diseases are increasingly common and most Tezcat do not live beyond 80. As with many other species, anagathics can significantly lengthen Tezcat lifespans.

DIET

Tezcat evolved from obligate carnivores with a diet of at least 70% meat and could not digest vegetable matter properly. Modern Tezcat digestion has improved somewhat and they can enjoy a wider variety of diets than their ancestors. However, they prefer a primarily protein-heavy intake, generally preferring that obtained from small game. Tezcat enjoy their meat and offal fresh and slightly cooked, but not raw. Organ tissue is appreciated for its high vitamin and mineral density.

Modern Tezcat have also introduced a small amount of vegetable matter into their diet. Their digestive tract is still heavily geared towards carnivory, so care must be taken to ensure that plant matter is adequately prepared. Freshly picked vegetables are steamed, boiled or roasted long enough for any tough plant fibres to break down and served and eaten alongside animal protein.

Tezcat dislike seasoning their food, nor do they enjoy sauces, gravies or condiments. Their food preparation is simple and uncomplicated, geared towards a bland pallet.

Tezcat enjoy a wide range of liquids. Standard drinks include teas made from steeping plants or herbs in hot water, mild stimulant made from a dried and crushed insect analogue, water and artificially flavoured and carbonated drinks like soda. Tezcat have also perfected fermenting fresh blood, creating a thick dark gold alcoholic beverage consumed during certain religious rites.

SOCIETY

Tezcat are descended from social predators who laid in wait and attacked prey from ambush, using their natural camouflage ability to keep hidden from view until the last moment. The preferred tactic used by Proto-Tezcat was to surround a watering hole and wait for prey to come to drink, then attack as a group using multiple bites and poison to bring down prey too large for an individual to handle. Pack members were affectionate with each other, using grooming, touch, and sex to maintain group bonds and ease tension. These behaviours have remained with Tezcat and strongly influence their society.

FAMILY

The basic social unit among Tezcat is the Iraahr, a group marriage between four to eight females and males who live, mate together and raise any resulting offspring. All members of an Iraahr are equal partners, ideally coming together and making decisions which affect the family as a group. It is not unusual for some Tezcat with strong personalities to dominate their Iraahr.

Iraahr are both emotional and economic partnerships, recognised by Tezcat law. When an Iraahr is formed, those involved sign contracts stipulating how property and finances are divided and how children will be supported if a member leaves the group or the whole Iraahr breaks up. Apart from the legal requirements, forming an Iraahr or joining an already established one requires little more than the agreement of all parties. While there are no formal festivities, the formation of a new Iraahr, or the admission of a new member to an already established one, is often an excuse for several days of licentious celebration.

Adult members of an Iraahr show almost complete intimacy with each other for the duration of their relationship. They live, work and play together as much as possible, sharing finances, food, residences and offspring. There are no restrictions regarding exclusivity within the Iraahr and individuals are free to be casually intimate with others outside of it.

While there are no social mores against intimate relations before entering an Iraahr, most female Tezcat prefer to have the financial and emotional security of a formal Iraahr before producing offspring.

Children are expected to remain with their parents until they reach the age of majority, which is 17, at which point they are legally able to leave the Iraahr home. Most young Tezcat choose to join a military service, leaving to be housed by their service. Tezcat who decide to pursue further education either remain at home or join a group of other students in a shared housing arrangement.

Tezcat particularly respect the elderly. Most of the aged, if unable to live independently, reside with one of their adult children, even if they require extensive care. It is not unusual for an adult child to resign from employment to take full-time care of a parent.

EGALITARIAN

The belief in equality extends from the Iraahr into the broader Tezcat society. They believe the maintenance of equality across the strata of society fosters good relations and community – it is the glue which holds civilisation together. Tezcat see each other as equals who are afforded the same rights and obligations as everyone else, regardless of who they are or their societal position. They believe all Tezcat have the right to life, justice, health, education, an adequate standard of living, freedom to be heard and freedom from torture. These fundamental rights are enshrined in Tezcat law.

Tezcat espouse that every individual's wishes and desires are of equal weight and bearing as everyone else's. This belief has led to larger social structures such as business groups, organisations, religion and government agencies being democratic rather than hierarchical. Decisions are made based on the majority consensus and not on the opinions of an elite individual or group. This does not mean Tezcat society does not have leaders. Quite the contrary, leaders are seen as guides and mentors who share their wisdom with others to inform their choices but are seen as no better than anyone else.

The major exception to this democratic philosophy and lack of hierarchical structure is the military. Even in the light of urgency, most military leaders will seek the opinions of peers or those next in command, if possible, before deciding. However, decisions may need to be made quickly or on the fly, where there is no luxury of time to consult with the organisation's body to reach a consensus. Regardless of this need, there is no artificial distance between the rank and file of officers and ordinary soldiers within the military – they are all seen as equal.

While Tezcat value their worth and equality, they do not feel the same about other lifeforms. Tezcat only extend their egalitarianism towards themselves and only open it to others if they are somehow viewed as members of the Tezcat species.

PHYSICAL AFFECTION

Tezcat have a minimal concept of personal space. They not only enjoy but crave physical contact and affection with others of their species. Physical affection and emotional connections among themselves are essential for establishing bonds and releasing tensions. Proto-Tezcat used grooming and personal contact to maintain cohesiveness in their packs. Modern Tezcat are no different.

Acts of physical affection release a hormone in the Tezcat brain like a combination of oxytocin and dopamine found in Humaniti. The hormone not only helps build bonds, promote empathy and aid in sexual arousal but it also activates the reward centres in the brain, making them feel happy, safe and secure. When the reward centres of the Tezcat brain are stimulated, they release another hormone like serotonin found in Humaniti, which is vital in staving off anxiety and depression and promotes feelings of contentment and calm.

Physical affection among Tezcat can take many forms. Most common is just being in physical contact with each other. When greeting each other, regardless of familiarity, Tezcat will often rub against each other and touch tongues while their tails entwine. Among friends and family, Tezcat will lounge against each other, gently caress each other's skin, stroke each other's quills and share massages.

Lack of physical affection has severe ramifications for Tezcat mental health and wellbeing. When deprived of the ability to express and receive physical affection, they rapidly show signs of depression. They become sad and listless, lose interest in things they enjoy, avoid social interactions, feel fatigued but have difficulty sleeping and show signs of anxiety and irritability. The longer Tezcat are denied physical affection, the worse these symptoms become. In time, the lack of physical affection will progress to losing their appetite and interest in eating, leading to weight loss, dulling of the skin's iridescent sheen, quill loss, organ damage and ultimately, death.

There are no known substitutes for Tezcat' need for physical affection. Drugs that artificially stimulate or introduce the hormones released by physical affection only work briefly as their body quickly adapts to them. Physical affection with other species does not cause the same release of hormones as with their own species. Tezcat view the deliberate withholding of physical affection as cruel and identical to torture. Tezcat society does not condone the intentional isolation of others. No jobs require isolation for long periods and more than one individual always fills those which do. If they know they will be alone for an extended period, Tezcat will seek the drugs required to keep at bay the mental harm being alone will exact and seek to minimise the time they are away from their species. Even Tezcat prisons do not isolate inmates, allowing them physical contact and interaction with each other and visitors.

CASUAL INTIMACY

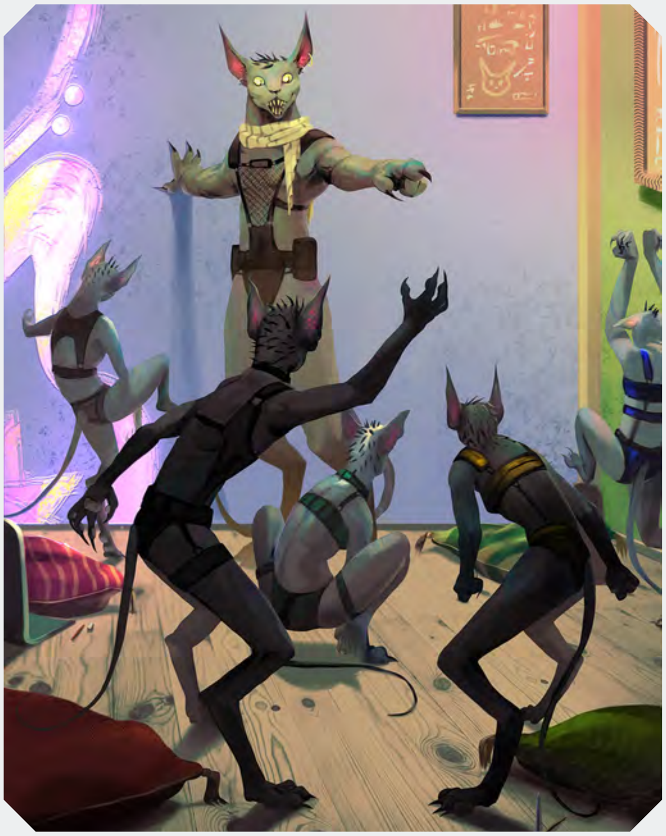
Tezcat are very open regarding casual intimacy. Tezcat frequently mate with each other, usually with partners, friends, and respected workmates. Mating with strangers or anonymously is not frowned upon but is viewed as less 'serious' than between those who respect and love each other.

Tezcat have no taboos regarding sexual orientation and most are sexually fluid in their attraction towards others. Casual intimacy is not viewed as promiscuity by Tezcat. They view sex as natural and not bound by the limitations of love or legal contracts. Nor are there any beliefs about owning partners, expectations of exclusivity or requiring permission to seek intimacy with others.

Naturally, there are risks involved in living in such an open society. Care is taken to ensure unwanted pregnancies and births are avoided. Safe practices ensure infections and diseases are neither contracted nor proliferated. Contracting such an infection is not seen as shameful or a reason for embarrassment, as accidents happen. However, not seeking a cure is seen as unethical due to the potential risk it poses to others. Intentionally infecting others is considered reprehensible and punishable by law.

PLAYFULNESS

Tezcat are a naturally playful species. To those unfamiliar with them, Tezcat can switch from almost any mood into playful frivolity without a moment's notice. A serious meeting can spontaneously dissolve into a game of tag around the boardroom without warning.



These playful interludes are not, as they may appear, a lack of focus or an inability to take things seriously. Instead, they are essential tools for releasing tension and relieving stress. Having evolved from a hunting species, Tezcat can quickly move to violence. Stress, anxiety and conflict can easily lead to a loss of control and physical combat. Before they achieved sophoncy, Proto-Tezcat instinctually resorted to playful games to relieve pent-up frustration and curtail aggression. Not only did playfulness release intra-pack tensions but acted to further bond the individuals of the pack into a cohesive group.

The instinct to resort to playing as a pressure release remained with the Tezcat even as they moved from sentience to sophoncy. As in all things, the strength of the playful instinct varies from individual-to-individual. Tezcat are taught how to use play as a circuit breaker from a young age. A mother seeing her nonverbal baby becoming frustrated at not being understood may begin a game of peek-a-boo. Seeing his children start to argue, a father may initiate a game of pounce and tickle. A teacher, seeing the stress students feel during an important exam or test may start a game of freeze-dance. Once the game is over and the tension has been released, Tezcat return to the activity as if nothing untoward had occurred.

Naturally, Tezcat will not erupt into play when it is foolish to do so, such as the crew on the bridge of a starship in the middle of combat. In actual dangerous or combat situations, or when leading up to battle, they rein in their exuberance and become the silent killers evolution has designed them to be. Once the immediate threat is over, the participants will likely break into enthusiastic and exerting shenanigans.

XENOPHOBIA

Tezcat are instinctually xenophobic – viewing other sophonts with intolerance, distrust, caution or disgust – with the intensity of those feelings based on how different the other species is. The more diverse, the more extreme the reaction is. Some particularly fanatical Tezcat will not tolerate any other sophont species and exhibit severe reactions towards them no matter how similar they may be.

Generally, endothermic humanoids such as Humaniti, Aslan and Vargr are considered with suspicion and contempt. Tezcat will regard such sophonts as inferior to them. They will expect the sophont to conform to Tezcat behaviour and values and will react with annoyance, anger or fear if they do not. Tezcat can come to respect or even befriend a particular sophont of this type but will consider the rest of the population dangerous and worthy only of contempt. Even if they consider such a sophont a friend, they can still patronise them and any feelings of betrayal may provoke an attack.

Sophonts such as Droyne, Sydite, Bwap or Nixxine, humanoids with extra limbs, wings, gills, or scales, are considered racial enemies. To Tezcat, they are dangerous animals who have somehow learned to use technology and seek to enslave them. Sophonts who embrace psionics, such as the Zhodani, are treated similarly and seen as co-conspirators of the Varaku, their extinct racial enemies.

Tezcat academics have learned of the long racial association Zhodani have had with Droyne and Chirpers, and as such, Tezcat distrust them. In this manner, Tezcat are similar in their intolerant view of psionics as the Third Imperium and sympathise with them. Psionic sophonts such as these might be able to visit a Tezcat world on a crucial diplomatic mission but would likely be attacked if they were on the streets.

While Tezcat have had little contact with nonhumanoid aliens such as Llellewyoly, K'Kree or Hivers, they would view them as nothing more than monstrous animals. No Tezcat would tolerate such abominations in their presence and are likely to attack them, flee or even become physically ill.

The extreme view Tezcat have of other sophonts is based on their loathing for the Varuku, who also evolved on the Tezcat homeworld. The Varuku were a species of amphibious psuedoreptiles who competed directly with the Tezcat and, at one point, had enslaved almost all of them.

Regardless of their reasons, Tezcat attitude towards other sophonts is a serious disadvantage. Tezcat realise humanoid sophonts can be cunning but have an arrogant assumption of their cultural superiority. Less Tezcat-like sophonts will likely have their intelligence and capabilities drastically overestimated and those most different to Tezcat will have their intelligence and capabilities underestimated. Their fear and hatred towards the different can lead Tezcat into poorly planned actions and lead them to stumble into simple traps or respond to provocation. More humanoid sophonts could use this weakness to manipulate Tezcat into actions against stranger-looking species. With almost no incitement, a Tezcat would readily suspect a Bwap, Droyne or Sheol of a sinister plot to take over the galaxy and take it upon themselves to end it. This attitude could be advantageous to a small Imperial, Vargr or Aslan colony which needs help fending off a Zhodani or K'Kree attack, for example – any group of Tezcat mercenaries would eagerly accept a contract to put a stop to such alien monstrosities.

BELIEFS

Tezcat are individuals and have many varying beliefs, but certain generalisations can be made which apply to the species to a greater or lesser degree.

Tezcat have a deep love of life, making them obsessed with death. They do not believe in an afterlife and much of their philosophy centres on the ephemeral nature of life and how what time is given should be put to good use. They do not believe in an eternal soul or spirit, nor do they believe in reincarnation. This belief leads Tezcat to love life and desire to live it fully, as once they are dead, there are no second chances.

Likewise, with no afterlife to look forward to, there is only a limited time in which they can experience consciousness and once it is gone, it is gone forever. Their outlook extends to everything in the universe, seeing nothing as constant, everything changes and everything eventually ends – essentially, everything inexorably leads to decay and destruction.

Tezcat have several different methods for the disposal of their dead but they commonly believe the consumption of the deceased shows them respect. Most Tezcat funerals involve devouring parts of their dead friends and loved ones. Sometimes, Tezcat soldiers will show their respect for valiant or honourable humanoid enemies by partaking – if biologically compatible – in portions of their bodies. Apart from these exceptions, Tezcat generally do not seek out other sophonts for food, except for Chirpers and Droyne, which they see as fair game.

Once a friend's or loved one's flesh has been consumed, the bones are cleaned and taken to a Shaper temple. There, the bones are ritualistically placed in the temple's walls, where they remain visible to all who enter. The front of the skull is placed in a niche facing outwards and rests on a pile composed of short bones. The long bones are arranged in a frame around the skull. The bones are not identified in any manner, nor are they the subject of any worship or veneration. Tezcat believe preserving the bones of their dead is another expression of respect.

Despite their lack of belief in an afterlife or soul, Tezcat believe in a creator deity they call the Kn-krutak – the Absolute – who created them as its chosen people. Doctrine dictates the physical form of Tezcat is holy as it was divinely inspired. Any deviation from such form is, at the very least, a slight to the creator and at worst blasphemy. It is unknown whether this belief results from Tezcat xenophobia or if it was formulated to reinforce it.

The Absolute is an abstract entity that does not share its Tezcat worshippers' form. The Absolute is a harsh and unforgiving deity, a personification of entropy which must be appeased and pacified by Tezcat so life may continue as usual. In the past, the Absolute was most often imagined as a yawning and empty void. In recent centuries Sagittarius A*, the supermassive black hole located at the centre of the galaxy, has come to be associated with the Absolute. Other smaller black holes are sacred and believed to be gateways or doorways leading to the Absolute.

THE SEEKERS

There is a faction among the Shaper priests known as the Seekers who wish to send a combination pilgrimage and scientific expedition to the nearest black hole – a journey of several hundred light years and potentially requiring the cooperation of other species. They are very interested in the stories they have heard of the Zhodani core expedition and are incredibly nervous about the aliens' intentions. Naturally, this opinion serves to feed Tezcat paranoia about the Zhodani Consulate. Additional information regarding black holes and the route taken to the galactic core is one of the few things which may lead Shaper priests to cooperate with other intelligent species.

The belief in the Absolute is directed by a religious organisation led by the Kis-aurash – Shaper priesthood. The priesthood claims its legitimacy through direct lineage from the cultural hero Vre'rhar, who freed the Tezcat from enslavement by the Varaku. The priesthood, and the doctrine they serve, are xenophobic, fanatical and conservative. They reinforce the sacredness of the Tezcat physical form and the superiority of their beliefs and culture. This belief has been rationalised through the struggle with the Varaku and Tezcat victory over them as evidence of their holy privilege and their sacred duty to destroy all mockeries of the true form.

As a result, Tezcat relationships with other sophonts have been characterised by xenophobia and genocide. An early encounter with Droyne, which led to war, helped cement these behaviours. Shaper adherents reserve their most extraordinary hatred for 'false gods' and delight in burning places of worship to the ground and exterminating their priests. Fortunately, as this behaviour is generally frowned upon by interstellar society, Shapers must curb these desires, although they are vital in sermons, religious media broadcasts and iconography.

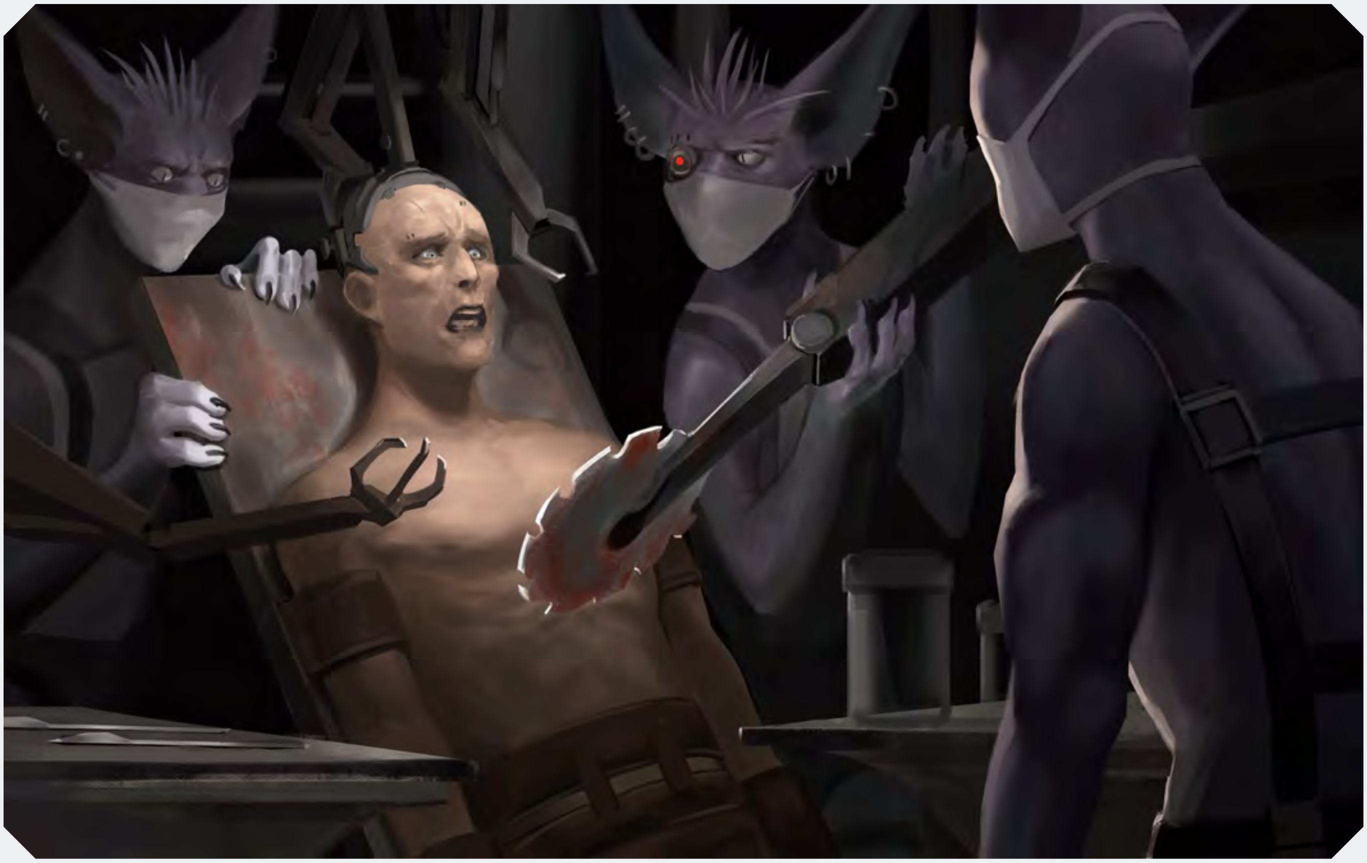
Although there are more moderate doctrines and rituals, live sacrifice is the most visible form of Tezcat worship. The role of sacrificial offering is reserved for Tezcats, as aliens are unworthy of being made an offering. Most sacrifices comprise criminals and heretics, although occasionally a voluntary sacrifice is requested from the populace for particularly significant rituals.

In ancient times, shrines to the Absolute were usually natural deep cenotes surrounded by megalithic structures. Sacrifices were bound and then flung into the pit. Most modern sacrifices are now ejected from an airlock – with vacc suits and enough air for a few days – on a trajectory calculated to take them to the galactic core and the embrace of the Absolute in a few billion years. A few Tezcat sacrifices have been saved from their fate by passing spacecraft before their air has run out but such events are rare in the extreme.

Despite their relatively narrow view regarding the form of holiness, Tezcat believe that sometimes they can be mistakenly born in the wrong body. Even the most xenophobic Shaper priest acknowledges this as occasionally occurring. This has resulted in a process called Incarnation, where a Tezcat is freed from such a disgusting state. Tezcat have no greater honour they can bestow on another sophont. The Shaper Church must approve all instances of Incarnation. Most often, Incarnation is requested by a Tezcat who witnesses the bravery or honourable action performed by another sophont. The witnessing Tezcat's Iraahr must agree to sponsor the new Tezcat before Incarnation can be confirmed.

Incarnation involves radical surgery so the sophont's body can conform to the Tezcat form. It can only be performed on species with similar bodies to Tezcat, such as most of Humaniti and other humanoid species – Aslan, Vargr and so on. The process involves approximately three months of invasive cosmetic surgery, including muscle, skin, cell and bone grafts, organ transplants, genetic therapy and cybernetic prosthesis. The surgery is conducted entirely without anaesthetics. Tezcat believe the pain experienced during the surgery assists in releasing the true Tezcat trapped within the mind and body of the subject. While the external appearance of the subject can be changed, their biochemistry remains the same, which can have some impact on things such as diet.

Extensive mental conditioning follows, resulting in brainwashing the subject into believing they are Tezcat. This process can take a significant amount of time and depends on the strength of will



of the subject. Techniques used include hypnotic suggestion, sleep deprivation, forced isolation and other methods commonly recognised by other species as psychological torture. If the subject survives the surgery and subsequent conditioning, they become, for all intents and purposes, Tezcat.

Even successful survivors of the Incarnation process tend to be psychologically damaged by the process. Some have developed psychological disorders such as bloodlust against their previous species, paranoia or dissociative syndrome.

As can be expected, most sophonts decline the offer to be Incarnated. Those who have been Incarnated have been suitable 'heroes' captured in battle and took up the offer while not understanding the process and believing they could keep their loyalty intact and continue fighting against the Tezcat. Unfortunately, this belief has been proved inaccurate – once the process of Incarnation has been completed, the subject will identify completely as Tezcat or go insane through the process.

There have been a few documented cases of mercenaries who have served with Tezcat and accepted the Incarnation offer. These are the few instances of voluntary Incarnation and if the subject were fully aware of the process, their sanity would be questionable.

All Tezcat treat the Incarnated as one of their own and will go to great lengths to make them feel at home. The sponsoring Tezcat Iraahr adopts a sophont who has been successfully Incarnated to facilitate transition into Tezcat society. As the adult members of an Iraahr are physically intimate with each other, the Incarnate is also expected to participate. As the Incarnate's genetic structure remains unchanged by the process, no offspring can naturally result from such contact, although adoptions are certainly possible.

Shaper priests can be stereotyped as a collection of bureaucrats who have used the priesthood as means to power, scholarly academics, philosophers, a few exceptional gravitational astronomers and fanatical zealots in whom faith burns with pure light.

The Shaper Church is a democratic organisation. Leaders are nominated from among the priesthood and the membership confirms their position through votes. Regular ballots likewise decide policy. Internal politics within the Shaper Church is passionate and fierce. Despite their democratic outlook and the general egalitarian attitude, priests often belong to different ideological factions.

CLEANSING

Shaper doctrine dictates that contact with other sophonts is inherently unclean and should be avoided. If such contact must be undertaken, it must be kept to a minimum and physical contact, such as touching, must be avoided. In the case of physical contact with another sophont does occur, Tezcat are considered unclean and must undergo a cleansing ritual before they interact with any other uninvolved Tezcat. To cleanse themselves, Tezcat must shower or bathe while reciting a series of purifying prayers, then must not eat or drink anything but water for 26 hours – the length of an Aum-rhar day. Failing to perform such a ritual before purification is considered a criminal offence and is punishable by amputating the right ear.

Shaper priests can be identified by their long robes, the colour and design predicated by their position within the church structure and their sect or ideology. Priests also wear black blank masks, which serve to deidentify them with the laity and present them as representatives of the Absolute.

The Shaper Church has eliminated all other religions on Aum-rhar. Most Tezcat are raised within the faith and believe in its basic tenants without question. They see themselves as the chosen servants of entropy as personalised by the Absolute and view all other sophont species as ungodly creations. Not all members of Tezcat society are fanatical Shapers. Some only follow the forms of worship and some radical factions – a few within the Shaper Church hierarchy – believe the faith should be reformed to allow other 'humanoid' sophonts into the congregation.

GOVERNMENT

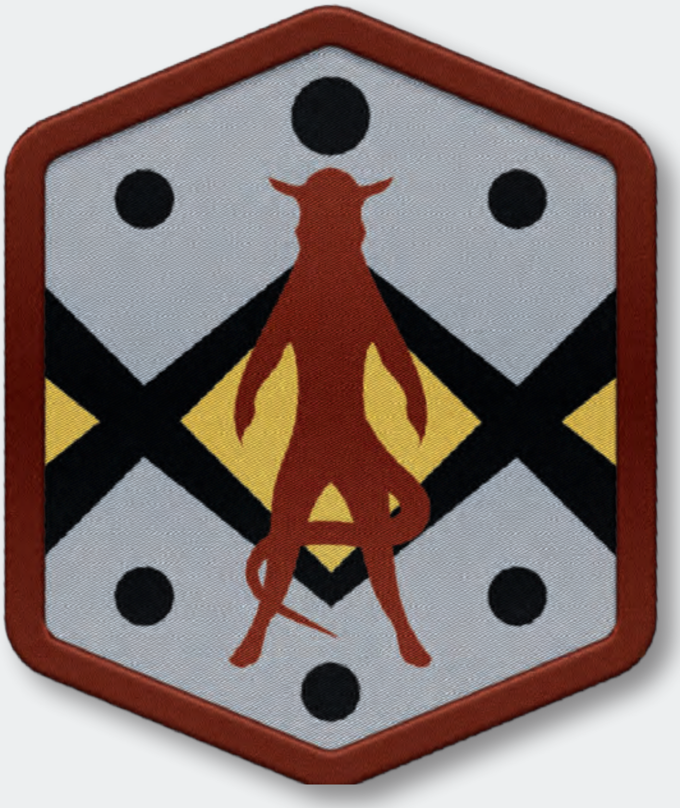
As an egalitarian people, Tezcat have experimented with various types of government throughout their history. Modern Tezcat prefer democratic governments, ones which value the input of citizens and where the will of the people is reflected in policy, leading to a preference for participatory democracies. However, practicality often results in representational democracies developing.

THE SOLAR HEGEMONY

The Lemente Ezva Har'Tez – Solar Hegemony of the Sacred People– is the interstellar union which joins together the worlds controlled by Tezcat. It is a small democratic theocracy heavily influenced by the Shaper Church. The union is governed from Aum-rhar (Reft 1907). It includes five other worlds – the populous agricultural colony Zamoran (Reft 2108), which is a conquered Droyne world once known as Draykoysap and the outlying colonies on Arnorac (Reft 2509), Gordon (Reft 2609), Undrelyn (Reft 1812) and R'Bak (Reft 1314).

The Solar Hegemony is technologically inclined, energetic and armed with a burning religious faith and powerful zeal to bring civilisation to the 'barbarians'. It is expansionistic, aggressive and heavily influenced by the Shaper Church and the military. Its politics attempts to balance xenophobia, paranoia and Tezcat instinctive urge to blend in and attack from ambush. Tezcat make poor neighbours but considering their isolated location in the Great Rift, they have few to contend with. They can make valuable allies, however.

The Solar Hegemony government comprises two houses. The upper house, Hurarma, includes high-ranking Shaper priests from the church hierarchy. It possesses veto power over any laws related to religious matters and acts as a supreme court of appeal. The lower house, Esrarm, comprises representatives elected from each world in the hegemony. The number of representatives a world may have in the lower house is based on its population, with the more populated worlds having a more significant number of representatives. Only priests or military veterans can vote for nominated individuals destined for the Esrarm.



The military and a bureaucracy support the lower house, can set taxes, regulate trade and decide on government policy. There is no president, prime minister or other executive authority. All decisions are made by majority vote, with executive responsibility held by various committees led by senior or popular members from within them.

Government committees represent areas of interest and comprise at least one member of the lower house and several experts within the field the committee represents. Committees include the Committee for Business and Trade, the Committee for Interstellar Affairs, the Committee for Religion and the Committee for Military. The committees' purview covers only the hegemony as a whole. Each planet is permitted independent rule if it abides by the Hegemony government's legislation and policy.

LAW

Tezcat laws are heavily influenced, if not controlled, by their Shaper religion and include ethical and moral codes taught by their religious traditions. Their laws are complex and detailed, covering most if not all aspects of Tezcat life, including crime, politics, economics, sexual intercourse, hygiene, diet, prayer, inheritance and fasting. Adhering to them is not only a matter of legality but of spirituality as well.

Enshrined in law is what a Tezcat is, stipulating the shape of their body, the number of limbs and functionality. Historically, young Tezcat born with a disability or deformity were not considered Tezcat and the mother was legally required to dispatch them. As medical and surgical knowledge advancements were able to remedy some congenital disabilities, disabled young were legally permitted to live until such medical intervention was proven successful and, if not, dispatched painlessly. Where medicine cannot help those born with a disability or defect, the law requires them to be dispatched.

The laws regarding the form of Tezcat bodies do not apply to those who have suffered an accident or injury after birth – they were born Tezcat and, despite no longer adhering to the holy shape stipulated by the Absolute, are still Tezcat. Therefore, there is no shame in having prosthetic limbs, sight aids or any other artificial method of correcting disabilities or disfigurement. Having received a disfiguring wound in the line of combat is seen as heroic and worthy of praise.

Also enshrined in law are all the religious observances Tezcat must follow. Tezcat must recite an obligatory prayer three times a day. There are a dozen prayers a Tezcat may choose from, each one focusing on a different subject or intention the Tezcat wishes to meditate on. Obligatory prayers are often recited in small groups, either among the family at home or in public if at work or in another location. There are circumstances where it is not illegal to forego obligatory prayer, such as when Tezcat are in combat, unconscious or suffering severe illness.

Tezcat are expected to fast during Mra'shhrowr, lasting 16 days each year. This period observes the creation of the universe, which Tezcat believe took the Absolute 16 days to complete. During this period, Tezcat are prohibited from eating or drinking anything while the sun is in the sky and must abstain from all sexual activity.

Tezcat legal systems are controlled mainly by the Shaper Church. All Tezcat have the right to a trial overseen by a Shaper priest specialising in the law. There are no lawyers. Likewise, no juries are involved in deciding the guilt or innocence of the accused. The verdict is entirely the decision of the presiding Shaper priest or priests. Tezcat are expected to defend themselves if accused of a crime, pleading their case and throwing themselves at the court's mercy.

Punishment for breaking the law is particularly harsh among Tezcat. It always involves some form of physical maiming for lesser crimes and the death sentence for serious crimes, all dictated by Shaper doctrine. Sophonts who differ significantly from Tezcat and break the law are routinely killed on the spot, no matter how minor or severe the crime, as dangerous animals. Suffice it to say, the laws and the right to a trial on Tezcat worlds applies only to Tezcat. Other sophonts who at least resemble Tezcat in form will most likely be subjected to summary sentencing, enacted as soon as it is expedient.

DRESS, ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Tezcat have no taboos regarding nudity and therefore do not normally wear clothing for the sake of modesty. In addition, clothing can interfere with their ability to camouflage themselves. If climate permits, Tezcat will wear nothing at all. Instead of clothes, Tezcat wear harnesses or belts which have pockets for carrying personal belongings and tools. Occasionally, a scarf or a few scraps of cloth will be worn for ornamental purposes.

In cold weather, Tezcat will don suitable clothing to keep warm. They prefer to wear natural skins fashioned from their kills if possible. Despite their dislike of clothing, Tezcat will not refrain from wearing armour or other protective gear when the need arises. Regardless of what they are wearing, civilian Tezcats prefer wearing bright solid colours, either unadorned or with straightforward designs or patterns.

Tezcat enjoy wearing body jewellery, particularly in their ears and tails. Most Tezcat have at least one piercing in their ears and the tip of their tail but lips, brows and other locations are not uncommon. Body jewellery can be elaborate and beautiful, made from expensive metals and sometimes adorned with precious stones or gems. Tezcat military and paramilitary insignia consists of jewelled earrings which denote branch and rank or rating.

Claw sheaths, designed to cover the tips of the fingers and the claws, are also commonly worn by both male and female Tezcat. The rings serve several purposes but the primary ones are as a show of wealth and to cover the claws so they do not accidentally injure others. Claw sheaths come in an uncountable number of styles and designs, ranging from the purely practical to the purely artistic, impractical for nothing else but as a fashion statement.

Tezcat art is known for its delicate and fine detail, which is not surprising considering their fine manual dexterity. As with most species, Tezcat appreciate many forms of art, although the subject of most of their art is religiously inclined, either drawing direct inspiration from scripture or pointing the viewer towards scripture.

Calligraphy is practised by almost all Tezcat, regardless of their talent or ability. Taught as a subject in school, most Tezcat carry on the practice into adulthood. Compositions typically comprise scriptural verse and the act of creating the art is often also a form of meditation where the artist meditates upon the verse and its implications while writing it. Calligraphy is traditionally practised on hand-made paper made from the fibres of the Sh'eech'fft plant. However, it is not unusual to find calligraphy on other types of paper, cloth and stone. Brushes are also preferably made from natural materials and ideally by the artist. Various types of inks and paints are used but a traditional ink called Rr-vyshh is made from the soot of Maa'shh branches and solidified using natural gelatine. In modern society, such hands-on detail is not always practical, so all but the most dedicated artists use mass-produced paper, brushes, paints and inks.

Stained glass is another art in which Tezcat excel, with the most talented artists commanding vast sums for their work. Stained-glass art can be found in the windows of all Tezcat buildings but it is not unusual for huge stained-glass pieces to be free-standing or suspended from supports in Tezcat buildings and cities. Artificial lights are used to illuminate and shine through the glass where natural light is not present.

Stained-glass art has progressed from two-dimensional pieces to intricate three-dimensional sculptural pieces, some with separate moving parts. Such works commonly depict heroes and battle scenes drawn from history and religion and can be truly enormous in size and take years or decades to complete.

Tezcat stone sculpture is best described as awe-inspiring. Like their buildings, Tezcats sculpt on a megalithic scale using natural stone. Such sculptures tower over their viewers and are used to line streets and decorate the exterior of public buildings and temples.

Finesmithing has been developed into an exquisite art by Tezcat. Their jewellery has a reputation for being extremely beautiful and delicate. Finesmiths use precious metals to create decorative and functional jewellery worn by practically every Tezcat. Rings of various types are most common, worn as piercings in the ears, tail and body, on the fingers and toes, or as bands on the wrist, arm, ankle or leg. Rings can be as simple as a single band made of one precious metal or a complex creation using multiple metals with multiple parts intertwined and crafted in intricate patterns. Precious stones and jewels are often incorporated into the rings to add to their beauty.

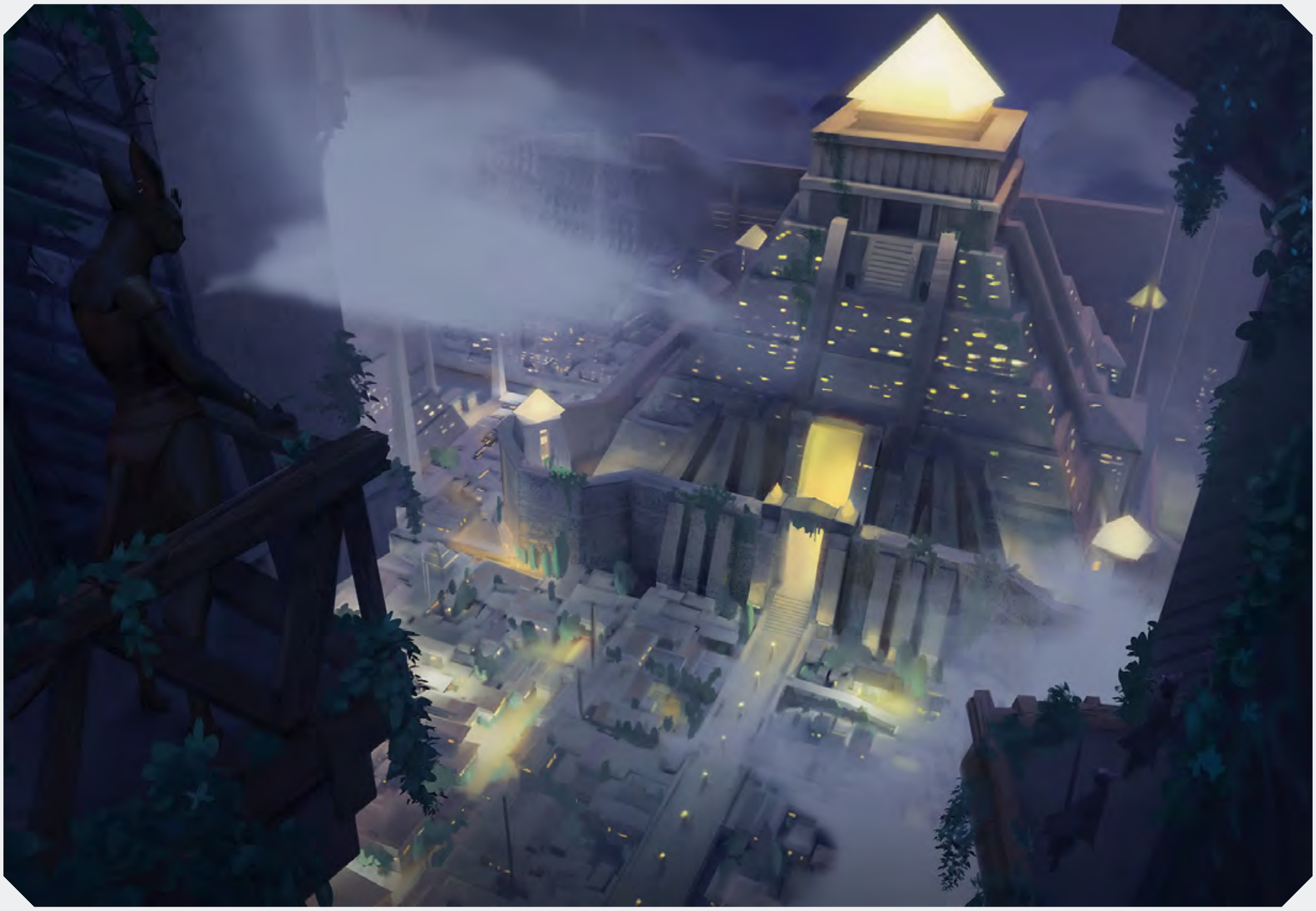
Tezcat architecture is quite simple. Despite their technological sophistication, they have not moved on from megalithic-style architecture. Buildings most commonly take the form of pyramids with a glass-covered or open courtyard in the centre. Heights range from only a few stories to over 100, with religious, government and corporate buildings being the largest. Materials used in construction are natural: huge carved stones of marble, granite, basalt or blue stone. Where natural materials are impractical or not cost-effective, artificial materials suffice.

Each building is surrounded by a garden, the size of which is denoted by the owner's wealth or the building's importance. Gardens contain native plants which are allowed to grow wild, occasionally giving them an unkempt appearance. The gardens ensure buildings are not too close together – Tezcat do not enjoy feeling as if they are crowded in. They act as natural environments for small animals, which can be hunted for food or recreation. Restrictions exist on which gardens Tezcat can hunt. Only the owners and their guests can hunt in the gardens surrounding private dwellings and buildings but anyone can hunt in the gardens surrounding public buildings.

Internally, buildings are designed with large open spaces. Rooms are divided by paper or stained-glass screens rather than solid walls, which makes the size and number of rooms easy to modify. Windows are generally constructed of stained glass or plastic, typically depicting stories. Colourful murals decorate the walls, typically depicting stories of victories and adventures from history or Shaper parables. Many murals are also accompanied by descriptive script and scripture.

Furnishings tend to be low and straightforward. Low tables, sleeping mats and cushions comprise most furniture in buildings – Tezcat do not use couches, chairs or beds. Furniture is constructed of natural materials such as intricately carved and polished wood, sculpted metal, or natural fibres. Where natural materials are not available, artificial ones are used but are considered poor substitutes.

Tezcat furniture is known for its beauty. It is not enough for their furnishings to be practical; they also need to be pleasing to the eye. Like other decorated items, furniture is adorned with carvings of real or mythical heroes and animals, depicting scenes from history and scripture. Sleeping mats and cushions are likewise heavily decorated, the images either printed or embroidered onto the material. Hand-made furnishings are highly prized by Tezcat who can afford them.



RECREATION

Tezcat participate in a broad range of recreational activities. The study of martial arts is taught to Tezcat from a young age, with most continuing the practice into adulthood as a form of exercise and meditation. The three martial levels are natural, primitive and advanced. Natural martial arts involve teeth and claws and rarely use blunt blows or strikes. There are 23 schools of natural martial arts, each with its own style and techniques. The schools developed from different Tezcat cultures, which is one way they maintain their cultural heritage.

Training in primitive weapons is more of an adherence to tradition than practicality in the modern day. Still, clubs, swords, bows and more are taught to young Tezcat as part of their primary education. The practice sometimes continues into adulthood. Competitions using primitive weapons are a common spectator sport and the most talented competitors can become quite famous and wealthy. Attending live exhibitions of primitive weaponry skill is also a popular pastime.

Tezcat see advanced weapon use as a duty, improving their ability to attack the unholy monstrosities that pollute the universe. They can choose from hundreds of advanced weapons, each with variations, to suit every conceivable need.

Hunting is another popular Tezcat pastime. Tezcat parents take an active interest in training their young in the hunt. Young Tezcat get the chance to hone their hunting skills, practice using their natural weapons and improve their reflexes. Tezcat enjoy hunting for food and prefer to bring down a kill using their teeth and claws rather than artificial weapons. Despite rumours to the contrary, Tezcat do not hunt what they consider to be other sophonts except for Droyne and Chirpers.

Games of all sorts are enjoyed by Tezcat, both as spectators and participants. Simple games like tag, blind man's bluff and hide and seek are popular among the young – older Tezcat enjoy similar but more complex games. Games that garner the most favour replicate the act of hunting.

Wrestling is a prevalent sport among the Tezcat, drawing huge crowds of spectators and enjoyed by all ages. Popular and skilful wrestlers can gain equivalent fame in the hegemony as modern music and holo stars do in the Third Imperium. Tezcat wrestling is very acrobatic, with opponents leaping, dodging, pouncing and grappling. The matches are held in an open heptagon the combatants must remain within. Winning can be achieved by forcing an opponent out of the ring, forcing an opponent to submit, or restraining an opponent in a hold which leaves them helpless for 10 seconds. Wrestling requires the claws and teeth of the athletes to be covered so they cannot be used, although underground wrestling organisations exist where highly illegal 'bare claw and tooth' matches take place. Most Tezcat schools have several wrestling teams grouped into age and weight divisions.

Tezcat religion is fully integrated into their society. Attending religious services is seen as an obligation and used to educate the masses in correct thought and behaviour. Aside from their religious commitments, Tezcat enjoy attending religious events as entertainment. Plays are often conducted, depicting parables or scenes from scripture. They are enjoyed by both young and old. Religious media productions such as movies and series are also consumed for their entertainment value and religious significance. The Shaper Church must approve all religious productions before they can be released to the public.

Reading scripture, storytelling and poetry are common among Tezcat, who use them for meditation or to seek answers to philosophical questions. Tezcat also enjoy attending scripture study groups, both informal groups and those organised by the Shaper Church. Study groups help hone the understanding of the Shaper scriptures and reinforce a sense of community among members.

Along with scripture, Tezcat enjoy a racy tale or story. Contradictory as it may seem, sensual and erotic tales may also cause embarrassment or shame for the author or consumer.

Similarly, Tezcat enjoy sensual dance and performance, which are not prohibited by their strict theocracy. Dances are shamelessly erotic and involve one or more Tezcat of both genders, moving provocatively alone and together with detailed choreography, and can often develop into an impromptu sexual performance.

Dance is accompanied by music such as percussion, wind and string instruments. Tezcat instruments are acoustic in nature and never electric. They find electronically generated music harsh on their ears and lacking artistic value. Singing as an art form is not practised by Tezcat except during religious services where Shaper priests orate scripture in a lilting sing-song voice.

BUSINESS

Tezcat have not founded any megacorporations and only a few of their corporations have spread across more than one planet. This is not surprising considering the sparsity of habitable worlds in Reft.

All Tezcat business conducted between themselves or with other species must adhere to the rules stipulated by Shaper doctrine. Contracts should be fair to all parties. Partnerships are preferred to hierarchical arrangements where one business or party is superior to another. Speculation is prohibited – gambling is illegal on Tezcat worlds and indulging in speculative trade is considered gambling. Charging or earning interest is forbidden, as is the trading of alcohol or recreational drugs. Lastly, handling money is considered unclean, requiring transactions to occur electronically or remotely if possible.

Since their advent into the stellar community, Tezcat mercenaries have made a name for themselves and have become a remarkably lucrative business. They make exemplary warriors, particularly in black, commando, counterinsurgency operations – if their anti-psionic, religious and racial prejudices are catered for. Care must be taken in keeping a firm hand on the leash of any Tezcat mercenaries – they are prone to occasional massacres and despoiling places of worship.

Tezcat mercenaries are fearless warriors with no qualms attacking the enemies of species whose appearance differs only slightly from their own, especially if the enemies are abominations or use psionics. The Imperium and the Aslan have utilised Tezcat mercenaries, especially during the Frontier Wars, where they zealously fought against the Zhodani Consulate. Several Tezcat companies specialise in providing mercenary groups ranging in size from squads to regiments.

Apart from the mercenary trade, Tezcat have an active merchant fleet which trades within their empire and, to a lesser extent, with their stellar neighbours. Generally, raw materials are imported to Aum-rhar and Zamoran, and manufactured goods are exported to the other four colonies. Items such as intoxicants, recreational chemicals and artistic expression considered heretical or politically subversive are prohibited or heavily taxed.

Tezcat trade with other species is limited by their trust and xenophobia. Even in a society of zealots, there are those whose faith is not so strongly inclined and are eager to import higher Tech Level goods or pay high prices to those merchants willing to cross the Rift to trade with them.

Tezcat manufacture TL12 goods of decent quality and their weapons are considered first-rate. Tezcat artisans are well known for their superior stained-glass artefacts, with antiques and even modern creations fetching high prices among collectors. Recorded visions of Tezcat sensual dances and plays and recordings of religious rites – including sacrifices – are considered exotic enough to interest some Imperial citizens. Tezcat have little interest in the cultural goods of other sophonts but high-tech equipment is always in great demand.

In addition to sanctioned trade, some smuggling always occurs, usually via Tezcat criminal elements importing goods from alien worlds considered heretical by the theocracy. Smugglers may be hired to sneak humanoid sophonts onto Tezcat worlds but once they are there, any uninvited species' chances of evading detection and execution are slim.

THE MILITARY

Tezcat are very patriotic and see military service as an honour and duty. Each Tezcat world has its own military services, as does the Solar Hegemony. Only veterans and Shaper priests are permitted to vote on most Tezcat worlds, making military service an attractive option for those who wish to participate in democracy but have no interest in pursuing a career in the church. Many young Tezcat will spend their first term in a military career, gaining the right to vote and switching to another career path. Many veterans remain part of their respective reserve forces, even after retirement.

Military organisations each specialise in a specific field or area of combat, such as peacekeeping, planetary defence, aerial offence and invasion. The most famous and feared Tezcat military force is the Grranshss Frr'arrl, loosely translated as the soulhunters. They serve the Solar Hegemony directly and are a combined naval and marine force charged with invasion and strike missions into enemy territory.

The Solar Hegemony has the authority to commandeer the armed forces of its member worlds to boost military strength and enable it to field forces far over what would be expected from such a small polity.

NAVY OPERATIONS

Naval forces are equipped with TL12 vessels and equipment. A few elite units are outfitted with TL13 and even TL14 inventory imported from beyond the Solar Hegemony. Tezcat spaceships are explicitly designed for operations in the Rift. Spacecraft are capable of jump-2 or jump-3 and are equipped with extra, collapsible or drop tankage to allow for multiple jumps through empty space with the need to refuel.

Squadrons are based around a single enormous broodship – a large vessel which carries extra fuel, food, materials and workshops to reduce the dependency on extended supply lines. Broodships are only lightly armed and armoured to make as much room as possible available for their inventory. Smaller guardships are assigned in groups of three to protect broodships from harm.

Tezcat make good use of fighter craft regardless of how flimsy they may be. Putting one's life in the direct line of danger is considered highly commendable to Tezcat and fighter pilots are seen as great warriors and heroes. Fighter craft range in size from light fighters of 10 d-tons armed with little more than a single fixed mount laser to heavy bombers of up to 150 tons armed with torpedoes or barbettes designed to be a risk to even capital ships.

Naval forces frequently use strategic deception and ambush tactics. They take full advantage of hit-and-run tactics to lure unaware targets into ambushes. Gas giants are the usual staging grounds for ambushes, where most of a fleet lies in hiding below the clouds and pounces when a bait ship draws in the enemy. Fleets frequently utilise Oort cloud refuelling operations before striking into an enemy system to ensure they have enough fuel to jump out again if retreat becomes necessary. Finally, Tezcat engineers are experts in rapidly establishing waystations and fuel depots in interstellar space.

ARMY AND MARINE OPERATIONS

Marine forces contain a high proportion of special operations troops and combat engineers and are skilled in mine warfare. All troops exhibit excellent camouflage discipline, as expected for a species for whom hiding comes naturally. They are outfitted with the best military gear available at either their world's Tech Level or TL12 for hegemony troops, with elite forces outfitted with imported TL13 equipment. While they have and use gravtanks and APCs, Tezcat forces prefer artillery over armour. A common tactic employed is using special forces to set artillery ambushes and lure enemies into killing zones.

Tezcat mercenary forces are usually ex-soulhunter marines and can be found throughout the Great Rift and neighbouring states. All mercenary and regular forces include Shaper priests, who exercise authority second only to unit commanders.

There are unconfirmed rumours that Tezcat officers on detached duty in the mercenary troops of other species gather information on how they conduct combat. The veracity of this rumour is yet to be ascertained.

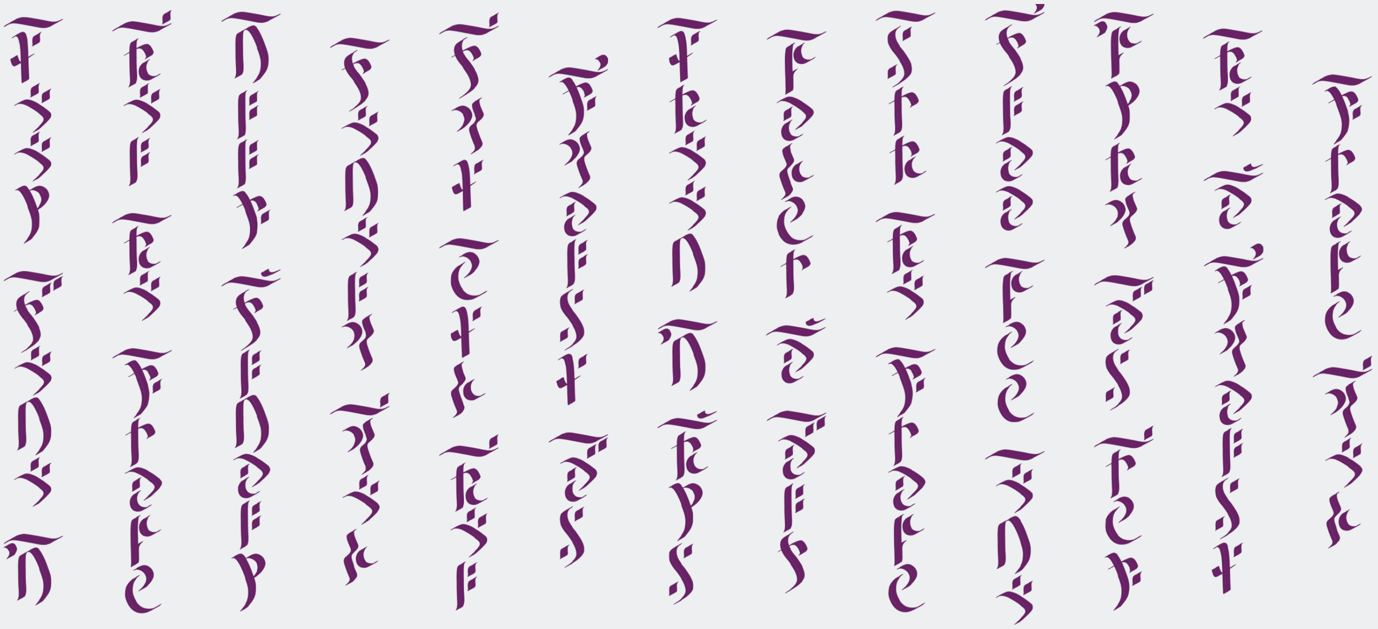
LANGUAGE

Tezcat speech is a mixture of hissing sibilants and low throaty growls. It has a disorganised structure where the same words with different tonal inflections convey different meanings. Tezcat interaction also includes a significant amount of body language, particularly skin colour changes, tail posture and ear movements, which are unconscious indicators of the speaker and listener's mood and intentions. It is a complex language for most other sophonts to learn but can be mastered with diligence and study; their body language is almost impossible to emulate without the correct anatomy.

Tezcat names tend to be fanciful and descriptive, comprising a string of soft words. Names are chosen by the child's parents and are based on the parents' hopes and aspirations for the child. Mothers select the names of their sons and fathers of their daughters. The words sume (son) and mra (daughter) are included in the name and used to tell a male or female name apart. As Tezcat are instinctively aggressive, many names are war-like in nature, for example, Sheethyrrr Mrohr Mra Rrarrathra Kithrsss, which translates roughly to Bloodied Claw who Tears the Heart, Daughter of Silent Death, Bringer of Lament.

WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Tezcat writing is easier to learn and is rather beautiful. Originating from the claw marks left on trees to denote territory by Proto-Tezcat, symbols developed to denote such things as danger, availability and what types of prey were in the area. Several alphabets developed and were slowly incorporated until only one is commonly used. Consisting of a combination of straight lines, squiggled lines and dots, the written language can be quite beautiful. The alphabet comprises only 15 letters, with punctuation using words instead of symbols and placed at the front of sentences to denote surprise, question and exclamation. Diacritical marks are used to indicate tone to eliminate confusion.



MOODS AND GESTURES

Tezcat rely heavily on body language to impart mood and intention, which is very different from human body language.

The tail is an excellent indicator of Tezcat mood. A slow swishing of the tail from side-to-side usually expresses anxiety and stress. A tail sticking straight out and back displays anger or fear. Happiness is shown with the tail held loosely upright in the air. A dragging tail indicates depression. If a Tezcat tail is hidden between its legs, it is badly frightened. The tail tip's slow, teasing motion is considered very sexy in both sexes, as are cold defiant stares.

The ears are also highly expressive. Twitching indicates amusement, laid flat they indicate readiness or nervousness. Held upright and open indicated alertness or intense concentration.

The use of skin colour is also significant in communication and even subtle variations can indicate shifts in mood and intention. As a result, Tezcat do not hide their feelings – their skin will shift colours and patterns in unconscious response to their underlying emotions. Therefore, they have learned not to lie to each other, as the truth would be quite evident to any observers. They do not mince words to be diplomatic or tell white lies to protect feelings. They do not hesitate to express anger or annoyance. Other species find the shifts in skin colour far too swift and difficult to understand.

Body language is also crucial in social encounters. Tezcat do not look each other directly in the eye, as it is seen as a challenge. Respect is signalled by exposing the throat. A Tezcat who is about to attack will become unnaturally still as their skin shifts to mimic the background, lay their ears back, stick their tail straight out, stare directly into their opponent's eyes and bare their teeth in a wide 'grin'. Low growls or ticking noises may also accompany this. Happy Tezcat usually retain their natural skin colour, keep ears upright and present an open stance. When sexually excited, Tezcat display wildly shifting colours and growl low in the throat.

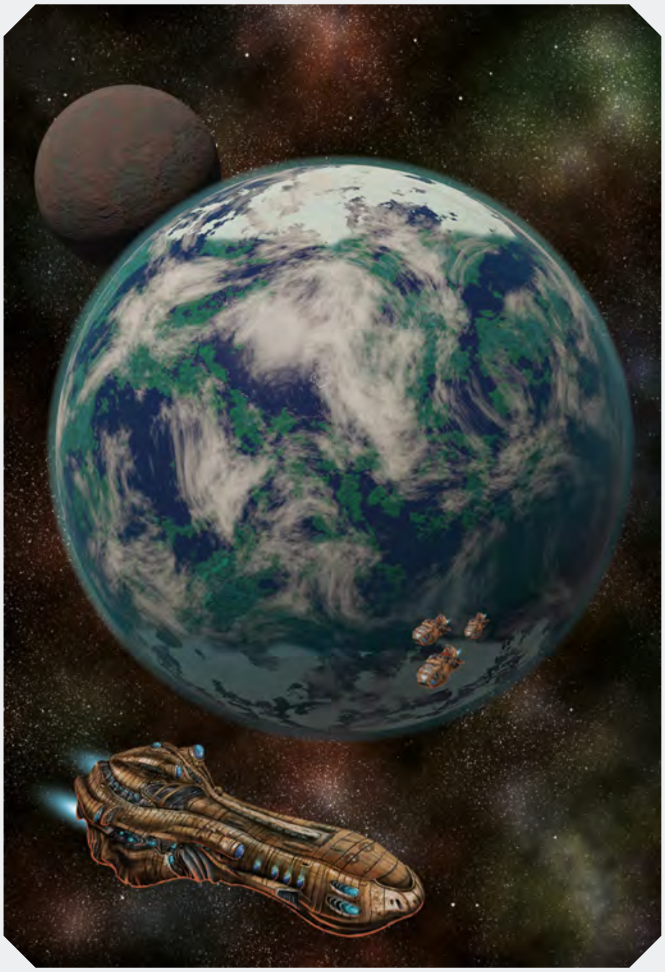
It is important to note that Tezcat do not show their teeth when they smile – baring the teeth is an act of aggression and a warning of an impending attack. Instead, Tezcat express happiness with slow eye blinks. Tezcat often confuse the toothy smiles used by other sophonts as threats, usually too late for their unfortunate victim to realise their mistake.

Mood	Gesture
Dismissive	Wide yawn exposing teeth.
Flirtatious	Gentle swaying of the tip of the tail, unblinking stare into the eyes.
Frustration	Open-shut flare of the nostril and twitching of the tail.
Laughter	Twitching of the ear and tail.
Readiness	Ears laid back and flat.
Puzzlement	Sniffs the air, slightly raised muzzle.
Salute	Claw rake in front of own body from left shoulder to right hip.
Slyness	Half-lidded eyes and twitch of the tail.
Happy	Ears held upright, slow eye blinks.
Threat	Sniffs the air, tail held stiff.
Worry	Ears laid back and flat, slow swishing of the tail.

THE TEZCAT HOMEWORLD

Aum-rhar (A857948-C) is in the Two Little subsector of Reft. The world is the second of 10 planets in orbit around a K9 V orange main sequence star locally known as Lemente. Aum-rhar resides in orbit at an average distance of 0.49 astronomical units. Aum-rhar orbits close enough to its primary to be constantly in its jump shadow, requiring incoming ships to either enter or leave jump at the shadow's edge, increasing the travel time in space. Aum-rhar has an orbital period of 160 days, 8 hours and 16 minutes, with a rotational period of 26 hours, 13 minutes and 54 seconds.

Aum-rhar has a diameter of 14,200 kilometres and an axial tilt of 0 degrees. Both poles are ice-capped and the climate is generally wet and cool, with frequent rain and fog. Seasonal changes are minor and only caused by the planet's slightly elliptical orbit.



Aum-rhar possesses a thin atmosphere at approximately 0.5 at sea level. The atmosphere is a standard mix of 80% nitrogen, 19% oxygen and one percent other gases. Visitors to the planet can breathe the atmosphere without assistance or protection. However, care must be taken to minimise exertion to avoid altitude sickness before the body has had time to adapt to the rarefied air.

Orbiting at 90,272 kilometres is Aum-rhar's only satellite, Ilynd, which completes an orbit every 21 days and 45 minutes. Ilynd is tidally locked to Aum-rhar and is massive enough to stabilise any axial wobble the planet may experience. The moon exerts sufficient tidal forces on Aum-rhar to affect the ocean tides.

Ilynd has a very thin atmosphere and projects have been undertaken to make it breathable. The moon only has a permanent population of just over 3,000 permanent residents and is also the site of several industrial plants and scientific enclaves. Ilynd is also known for hosting the personal residence of the elected High priest of the Shaper Church. The complex includes church libraries and master computer files, a training centre, a medical centre and a domed hunting park incorporating plants and animals from many worlds.

GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Aum-rhar is a rocky world with a dense core made of iron. It has a higher density than standard, giving the planet a gravity of 1.35G. A magnetic field generated by the rotation of the core protects the planet's atmosphere from being stripped away by the solar wind and helps deflect cosmic radiation from the world. The crust is still geologically active and divided into six major tectonic plates. Volcanism is relatively common, with eruptions occurring between 45 and 65 times yearly.

THE AUM-RHAR SYSTEM

The inner system contains two worlds, Hrn-mhrn and Aum-rhar. Hrn-mhrn, in orbit zero, is a tidally locked rocky world. It supports a small research facility in the twilight zone. Aum-rhar is in the first orbit and is the system's main world.

The outer system contains most of the system's planets. Mrhna is in orbit two. It is an uninhabited world with an exotic atmosphere, with the surface almost wholly covered with fluid. Orbit three contains Auohrn, the first of the systems gas giants. It is a Class II gas giant dominated by water clouds and coloured with alternating bands of blue and white. It has five large moons and 11 moonlets, with only the first and largest moon settled. Orbit four contains the first of the system's two planetoid belts. The belt stretches halfway to orbits three and five. It is relatively prosperous and is extensively mined by Tezcat belters.

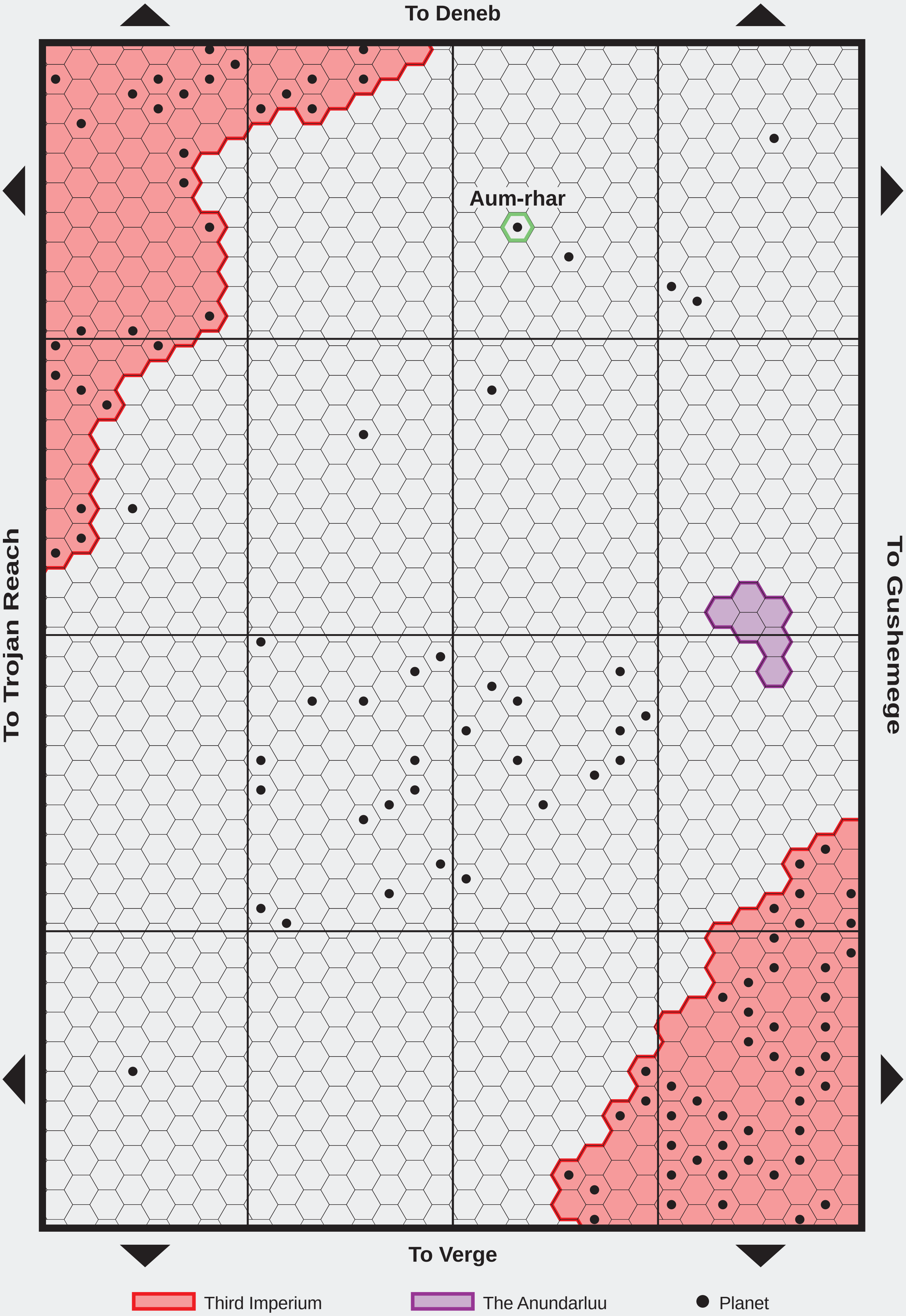
Sswaou and Rhn-wafft are the system's outermost gas giants occupying orbits five and six. Both are Class 1 gas giants dominated by ammonia clouds and banded with shades of brown, orange and tan. Sswaou is the largest gas giant in the system. It has two large moons and 35 moonlets. Rhn-wafft has two beautiful ring systems composed primarily of ice particles, four moons and 98 moonlets, none colonised.

Mnang-hft resides beyond the reach of conventional manoeuvre drives in orbit seven and is the system's only ice giant. It is coloured a brilliant blue with bands of lighter blue encircling it. It rotates in the opposite direction as all the other planets in the system and its orbit is at an angle of 24 degrees from the orbital plane. It has four moons and 34 moonlets. All of the larger moons are colonised.

A broad planetoid belt halfway to orbits seven and nine is the second planetoid belt in the system. It has a width of over 30AU and is sparsely populated with asteroids composed primarily of ice. In orbit nine is the frozen world of Ffifta. At almost twice the distance is Warhnou in orbit 10. It is a tiny world with no atmosphere but hosts a substantial mining colony. Lastly, in a wildly elliptical orbit which takes it over three times the distance from the sun as the orbit of Warhnou, is Rahrrwaou, a rogue planet captured by the primary several billion years ago.

The Aum-rhar System

Orbit	Distance (AU)	Type	Name	Notes
Primary	—	K9 V	Lemente	Luminosity 0.048, Radius 0.5522, Mass 0.5052
0	0.22	Meso World	Hrn-mhrn	Y532030-2
1	0.49	Main World	Aum-rhar	A857948-C
2	0.7	Macro World	Mrhna	Y99A000-0
3	1	Large Gas Giant	Auohrn	Diameter: 355,542km
4	1.54	Planetoid Belt	—	—
5	3.04	Large Gas Giant	Sswaou	Diameter: 96,452km
6	4.3	Large Gas Giant	Rhn-wafft	Diameter: 349,389km
7	9.55	Small Gas Giant	Mnang-hft	Diameter: 46,365km
8	19	Planetoid Belt	—	—
9	40	Macro World	Ffifta	Y858002-2
10	70	Tiny World	Warhnou	Y000535-6
12	169	Macroworld	Rahrrwaou	Y799000-6


To Deneb
Aum-rhar
To Trojan Reach
To Gushemege
To Verge
🟥 Third Imperium
🟪 The Anundarluu
● Planet

Four major continents dominate Aum-rhar's surface, with Norhas and Marrash in the northern hemisphere and Rahresheft and Isshas in the southern hemisphere. Several large volcanic islands are in the oceans along major fault lines. Two large oceans, the Varn-ou and the Hrnaar-ef, straddle both hemispheres while a third large ocean, Narhraow, is in the northern hemisphere. Several smaller seas are in both hemispheres. Mountains tend to be low and squat due to Aum-rhar's high gravity, although the thin atmosphere has caused little erosion, making them jagged and hazardous.

The presiding cool temperatures and heavy precipitation heavily influence the environment. The dominant environments are cool forests in the temperate regions, cool rainforests nearer the equator and tundra and glaciers in the polar regions. Dry, hot deserts are rare on Aum-rhar.

NATIVE LIFE FORMS

The native life of Aum-rhar is carbon-based, with a DNA analogue utilising a G-quadruplex structure. Amino acids have a right-handed chirality and sugars have a left-handed chirality, the opposite of what is found on Terra, meaning while organisms bearing different chirality will not be poisoned by consuming food from Aum-rhar, little nutrition will be gained and vice versa.

Plant life is similar to examples found on other worlds in Charted space, ranging from simple algae to tree analogues. Plants tend to be short and thick, with taller tree analogues utilising a silica matrix in their cell walls to provide additional strength. Plants use cellulose in their cell walls for strength. The reduced light spectrum emitted by the sun has led to leaves being shades of red, with lighter reds near the equator and darker reds nearer the poles. Plants have evolved flowers to attract life forms to assist in pollination.

Fungal analogues have not evolved on Aum-rhar. Instead, the role of decomposers is performed by a wide variety of bacteria, some of which are large enough to be seen with the naked eye.

Animal life is highly evolved and diverse. Several mass extinctions have resulted in the evolution of a succession of dominant lifeforms and imparted additional development. Since the last extinction event 45 million years ago, vertebrate mammal analogues have emerged as the dominant land-based lifeform.

Other significant lifeforms include vertebrate repto-amphibians, which can live on land but require water to reproduce, found on land and water, and various invertebrate analogues. Ocean life is dominated by multiple vertebrate piscine forms, followed by invertebrate medusoid and crustacean analogues. Vertebrate reptile analogues dominate avian life.

Vertebrates are bilaterally symmetrical quadrupeds with closed cardiovascular systems. They possess two main body parts – a head and a body. Most sensory organs are on the head, including two eyes, two ears, a nose and mouth. Mouths consist of a mandible which opens vertically. Fur has not evolved on Aum-rhar. Instead, quills have evolved from scales and act as a fur analogue on many mammaloids.

Invertebrates are generally bilaterally symmetrical with a closed cardiovascular system. Although not as numerous, there are also examples of radial and trilateral symmetrical invertebrates. All invertebrates possess an external skeleton and a variable number of paired legs and eyes. Body sections also vary between a combined head/body, a defined head and body, and a head/body/abdomen design.

Flight has evolved several times on Aum-rhar but proves problematic with the low atmospheric pressure and heavy gravity. Flying lifeforms have adapted with long wingspans, hollow support structures and narrow bodies to compensate.

Fossil evidence has shown that Aum-rhar has had, up to the relatively recent past many highly dangerous lifeforms, which have since become extinct by either natural processes or Tezcat intervention. Significant numbers of dangerous creatures still exist on the planet, with a notable proportion using venom and natural camouflage as offensive and defensive adaptions.

STARPORT

Aum-rhar has a starport with all the services a Traveller would expect from a Class A facility within the Third Imperium. The starport comprises a large orbital highport and a smaller surface downport near the capital city of Aum-ftar'ryt. Interstellar traffic is directed to the highport, with only local and otherwise authorised traffic using the downport. As Aum-rhar is not a client of the Third Imperium, nor is the starport administered by the Starport Authority, it does not act as an extrality zone and all Aum-rhar and Solar Hegemony laws apply to visitors.

Considering its isolated location, the highport still services approximately 50 interstellar spacecraft daily, with room to berth and dock up to 400 vessels simultaneously. Ships up to 1,000-tons can be berthed internally, while larger vessels must dock outside the port. Several shipyards capable of constructing craft up to 50,000-tons and one up to 5,000,000-tons, are located nearby at a higher orbit.

The highport is disk-shaped, with eight arms extending at uneven intervals where larger vessels dock. Curved connecting structures link several arms to facilitate movement around the disc without moving directly into it.

Located centrally on the top of the disk is a large transparent dome through which the red vegetation of a biome is visible. Arranged unevenly around the dome are several tall step pyramids containing administration, flight control and military offices. The most significant step pyramid houses the governmental and administrative offices of the Solar Hegemony, the assembly hall and the high Shaper court. Around the sides of the disk are bays for smaller vessels to dock.

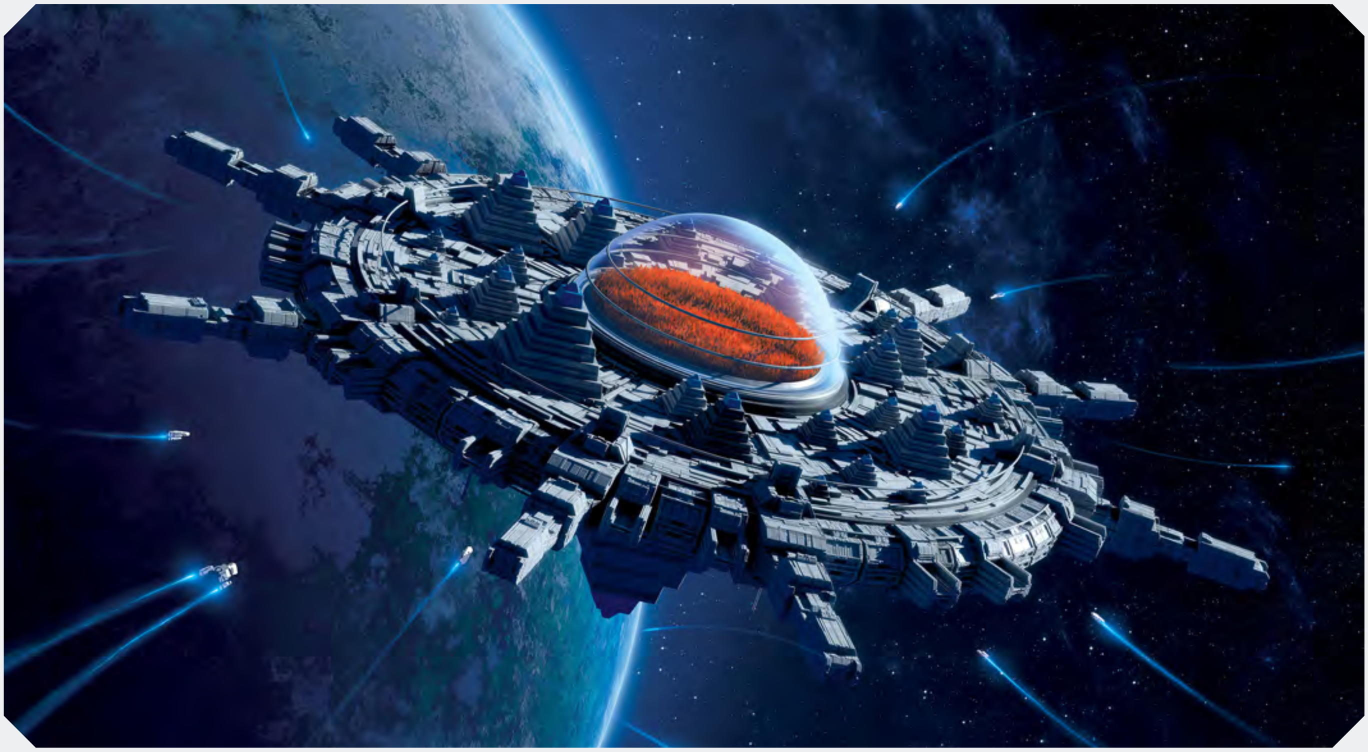
One-quarter of the highport and two of the docking arms are reserved for the Solar Hegemony and Aum-rhar navies. The rest is intended for both commercial and private use.

Within the disc, closest to the inside edge, are the terminals which connect to the berthing bays and docking arms, allowing passengers and crew to embark and disembark. The terminals lead to the concourse where commercial and entertainment offer wares, itinerant accommodation, customs and other customer-based administrative functions. The warehouses, workshops and operational functions are located under this level, which maintain the highport.

Extending below the disk is another group of tall, inverted step pyramids which contain the powerplant, fuel and water storage, and other maintenance functions.

Over a dozen shuttles offering affordable passage leave the highport daily for the downport. Other shuttles destined for other spaceports on Aum-rhar depart intermittently. Other shuttles ferrying cargo are scheduled to depart between the passenger shuttles.

The downport is relatively small compared to the highport, covering an area of three square kilometres. A high wall surrounds the downport with only one public entry and exit, although there are several entries and exits reserved for use by employees. It is primarily a cargo handling facility but there are adequate provisions for passenger use. The landing facilities can support craft up to a maximum of 5,000-tons. Berthing facilities are available for up to 50 vessels at a time.



A large step pyramid is the location of the downport administrative centre. It coordinates with the highport to ensure a safe interface between orbit to surface and back. In addition to administration, the limited passenger services and terminals are located here. Numerous large warehouses are situated between the berthing bays where cargo is examined by customs and stored before being loaded onto ships or distributed across the planet.

The downport is also a significant gravport, providing public transport through hired gravcars, taxis and trams, which shuttle passengers between cities around the planet.

TECH LEVEL

Aum-rhar is a mature TL12 world. Weapons technology is slightly more advanced and is at a late TL12 sophistication with some very early TL13 capabilities. Computer technology is lower at a mature TL11. Medical technology is the lowest, being at only a mature TL10 sophistication.

Astronomical observation technology is highly developed and has impacted gravitic research. Tezcat are reasonable but unexceptional engineers, except in advanced ceramics, glass and composites, in which they excel. Tezcat use automated robot factories to make most goods and can manufacture them to individual specifications.

GOVERNMENT

The government of Aum-rhar is like the Solar Hegemony in that it has an upper and lower house. The upper house comprises Shaper priests elected to those positions by the church clergy and has veto rights on all bills put forward by the lower house on religious or moral grounds. The lower house comprises individuals elected to those positions by voters and represents those voters in political and legislative matters. Only military veterans or Shaper priests are permitted to vote in the elections for the lower house.

Unlike the Solar Hegemony, the lower house does have an executive branch headed by a *hruavist*, or president, and their staff, who have veto rights on all legislation brought forward in the lower house. The president is elected by popular vote by the Shaper priests in the upper house from the lower house members.

The president selects from the lower house members a *nraw-uft*, or minister, to head particular committees and the administrative offices which oversee specific portfolios, such as the Committee for Finance, the Committee for Planetary Ground Defence and the Committee for Education. The minister is responsible for bringing bills to the lower house for decision.

Elections for the lower house occur approximately every five standard years and there is no limit to the number of terms a member may be re-elected. The president's election is also held every five years, if necessary, after the elections for the lower house are concluded. Membership in the upper house is for life and elections only occur when a seat becomes vacant through death, illness or retirement.

LAW LEVEL

The Law Level on Aum-rhar is 8; all bladed weapons and stunners or greater are prohibited, as are all addictive drugs, including alcohol, caffeine, nicotine and similar stimulants, as well as entertainment and publications considered heretical or radical.

While the law appears high, there are notable exceptions. While it is illegal to import, possess or carry any prohibited weapon, there are locations where Tezcat can learn to use and practice the use of such prohibited weapons. Every city and town has at least one school where primitive weapon use is taught, as there are firing ranges where firearms can be rented and shot on-premises. Legally, an ordinary Tezcat may seek authority to possess a restricted weapon where they can prove an understanding of how to use and abide by the laws prohibiting open carry. Military, police personnel and security guards are permitted a greater latitude in the weapons they may carry in their duties.

Suffice it to say that where there is any form of prohibition, there is always a healthy black market for those items. Almost any Tezcat can obtain a desired weapon with the proper knowledge or contacts, often at a hefty price. Likewise, drugs and forbidden entertainment or information are available for Tezcat willing to pay the cost and risk getting caught. The black-market demand fuels a vigorous smuggling trade of prohibited goods. Smuggling operations are generally controlled by powerful crime families and cartels, which cause problems when territoriality or the right of supply comes into question.

The judiciary system on Aum-rhar is convoluted and confusing to outsiders. There are several law enforcement agencies, each with an area of specialisation. Conflicts occur where crime falls under the jurisdiction of one or more authorities. In these cases, authorities are expected to cooperate but competition and resentment are often fierce. While the Shaper religion heavily influences all laws, there is a separate police force comprising solely of Shaper priests, which deal exclusively with religious law infractions.

Tezcat are presumed guilty until proven innocent in a court of law. There are no lawyers on Aum-rhar and the accused are expected to defend themselves. Trials are always heard by a Shaper priest who has specialised in the branch of law involved. They are solely responsible for determining the accused's innocence and setting sentences. Sentencing is harsh by the standards of other species. Most involve amputating a limb or organ, and many involve execution. Crimes which draw the death penalty include showing contempt or disrespect for the Absolute, speaking against church doctrine, stealing or misappropriating sacred objects, disfiguring the Tezcat form and murder.

Tezcat who have been declared guilty in court have the right to appeal the decision through Mwarba-fa – a trial by combat. Mwarba-fa is always to the death, so often, only those criminals who have been given a death sentence request it. The court can deny Mwarba-fa but rarely do. The court assigns a specialist Shaper priest, called a Hari or Partisan, to act as its representative in the combat. Only natural weapons and the ceremonial tzasai knife are permitted during the trial. Such trials are always public. If the accused successfully dispatches the Hari, their guilty conviction is overturned and they are free to return to society.

Mwarba-fa challenges are often grouped into events which spectators can purchase tickets to attend or watch via paid live broadcast. Such events draw huge crowds, especially when the accused is notorious, or the Hari has achieved fame due to their skill.

The execution of criminals who choose not to appeal is always the duty of the Shaper priests, who time executions to coincide with significant rituals. Criminals await execution in prisons where they are treated well and permitted to interact with each other.

MILITARY

Aum-rhar funnels a significant proportion of its budget towards military capability. It can field a strong defence comprising ground, airborne and space capabilities. Planetary forces include 2,200 regiments for a total of 11,000 battalions, 500 of which are lift-capable. Of the battalions, 4,000 are active, with the remainder comprising reservists. Furthermore, a militia of 560 million regiments can be raised in an emergency or to defend the planet as a last resort.

The military is equipped with top-of-the-line TL12 gear, with elite forces equipped with gear imported at TL13. The Aum-rhar military favours artillery over armour and lift battalions, which their assets reflect.

Space naval forces are similarly impressive, comprising heavily armed and armoured system defence boats, monitors and jump-capable warships. The Aum-rhar flagship, named the *Shtav Marinaf Ou Vashrnow* – Destroyer of Worlds, Stalker in the Endless Void – is a 60,000-ton armoured cruiser bristling with turrets and boasting a meson spinal mount.

ECONOMY

Aum-rhar is a high-population garden world with a strong labour force composed of live and automated components. Due to the isolated location of Aum-rhar, the planet is only of ordinary importance. A robust infrastructure supports the world's population, making the movement of individuals and goods easy. Primary exports include alloys, mechanical goods and information.

Tezcat consumer products are often beautifully designed with intricate and delicate patterns and images that tell a religious or moral story. While beautiful, they are no more functional than those produced by other sophonts.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Aum-rhar has a population of eight billion, practically 100% Tezcat. The tiny fractional percentage that are not are individuals who have successfully undergone Incarnation and consider themselves Tezcat or are in the process of undertaking Incarnation either voluntarily or not.

CULTURE

Before unification under a world government, the cultures of Aum-rhar were territorial and aggressive. Wars were frequent and even after global unification and minor conflicts still occurred. Aum-rhar is dominated by the A'Pur culture, originating in the eastern island of Marrash. They conquered the other Tezcat nations in 920 through technological superiority and fanatical belief; after this, the A'Pur wrestled control of the Solar Hegemony, further spreading their culture.

While it is fair to say Tezcat are a religious species, those on Aum-rhar are said to have a burning and unwavering faith of fanatical proportions. They couch every action they take, every word they speak in the precepts of the Shaper religion. They see themselves as the only shining example of what it is to be true Tezcat. Even Tezcat from other worlds sometimes find their homeworld counterparts zealously unreasonable in their faith.

Small enclaves of the conquered nations' cultures still exist on Aum-rhar and other planets of the hegemony. Most have successfully integrated with the dominant A'Pur culture. However, others occasionally attempt to resist or overthrow the current regime, which is the primary cause of small conflicts on the planet.

URBANISATION

Aum-rhar cities and towns are generally located on seacoasts, lakes or rivers. They are attractive, with wide avenues dotted with towering statues, trees and bushes. All Tezcat cities are lively and chaotic but are generally built on a similar plan – the largest and tallest buildings are in the city's centre, with buildings gradually decreasing in size and height as they move towards the edge. Commanding the centre of every Tezcat city is a Shaper temple with its gardens and parks. Surrounding the church are government and administration buildings and their surrounding gardens. Other business buildings tend to form the next section of the city and finally, the abodes of private citizens, with those of the wealthiest closer to the centre and the poorest at the edges. Randomly interspersed throughout cities are hunting parks where Tezcat may relax and hunt for sport or sustenance.

Industry is typically located in orbit, so cities are clean and unpolluted. Power is generated almost exclusively by fusion plants and supplemented by other forms of renewable energy. Power is normally centrally generated and distributed throughout the city and infrastructure is well-maintained and comprehensive.

Vehicles generally use clean forms of energy. Electric and hydrogen batteries are the most common, with micro-fusion plants in larger vehicles. Ground vehicles are banned from using the city streets during daylight hours but autonomous vehicles hum through the city streets at night. Automated grav vehicles, both public and private, fly seemingly haphazardly like buzzing insects in the skies above the cities. All traffic within city limits is managed by a central traffic control computer, which controls all vehicles, monitors traffic and prevents collisions.

Farming is not valued highly by Tezcat and is not a sought-after profession – especially vegetable farming. Cities are typically surrounded by vast tracts of agricultural land where the few domesticated food animals are reared. Minimal land is set aside for horticulture, as fruit and vegetables are not in great demand. Most of the work on farms is performed by robots with oversight by a farmer.

PLACES AND EVENTS

Aum-rhar sees many Tezcat tourists and pilgrims but is not exactly welcoming to visitors of other species. Still, some rather interesting locations and events should not be missed if the chance to visit them presents itself.

Rifsh Kasang ou Mraa-assht Kis-nouraou: Located in the capital city of A'Purr-Hrnash, the Rifsh Kasang ou Mraa-assht Kis-nouraou – High and Most Holy Temple of the Shaper Church – is the centre of the Shaper Church on Aum-rhar and contains the personal residences of the members of ruling Holy Council. The temple resembles an enormous step pyramid constructed of massive, polished obsidian blocks and stands over 100 stories tall. Towering over all the other buildings around it and located in the very centre of the city, it is surrounded by a walled lush and wild garden which all manner of local wildlife have populated for the temple occupants to hunt. The avenues leading to the temple are lined with enormous statues of religious figures, presenting a truly awe-inspiring sight.

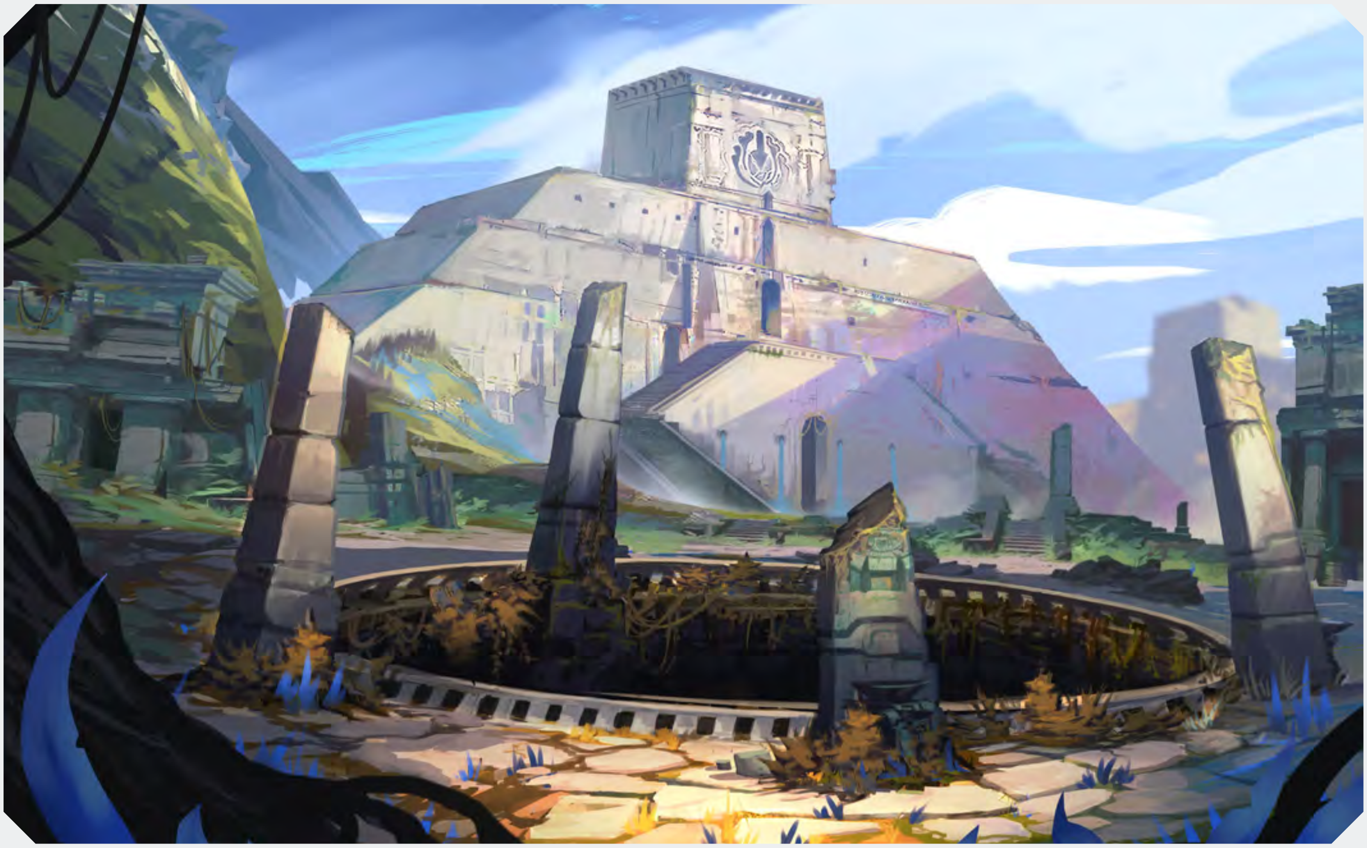
Only a restricted area of the temple is open for visitors, including the massive Shaper cathedral, which occupies the pyramid's centre and is open to the sky. The cathedral's walls hold the skulls and skeletal remains of millions of dead Tezcat, with those of more important individuals placed higher towards the central opening. Various areas of the cathedral are sectioned off, with beautiful stained-glass screens depicting tales taken from Shaper scripture. The remainder of the pyramid closed to the general public includes the private residences of the Holy Council members, private chapels, administration offices, computer records archives, surgical suites and holding cells for involuntary Incarnations. On the outside of the temple structure are landing platforms for church grav vehicles. Restricted areas are monitored both electronically and by Hari Shaper priest guards.

Rhfistt Narwaou-hssh Maraaft Ke: Scattered across Aum-rhar are the ancient execution pits known as Rhfistt Narwaou-hssh Maraaft Ke –The Pits of Becoming Nothing – used in the time before spaceflight as the ritual execution sites for Tezcat sacrifices. Most pits are ancient and located near Tezcat cities but some are distant and difficult to reach. Each pit is surrounded by huge megaliths, which still raises questions about how primitive technology moved them from quarries often kilometres away and stood them upright. Most pits are no longer in use but some still see regular sacrifices being performed at them.

Chfashh-shiffke Mraa Shaast: The most important event for all Tezcat is the Chfashh-shiffke Mraa Shaast – The Day of Deliverance. This festival celebrates the defeat of the Varaku and the release of Tezcat from slavery. It is a debauched affair where Tezcat re-enact events of the war, burn effigies of Varaku and partake in carnal pleasures. While the possession and consumption of alcohol are expressly forbidden any other time on Aum-rhar, during the Day of Deliverance festivities, the imbibing of an alcoholic beverage made of blessed and fermented Shfraavsht blood known as Shfraa is permitted. Shfraa is fermented and sold by Shaper priests specifically for the festival.

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

The animal life on Aum-rhar tends to be short-tempered, dangerous and aggressive. Even small herbivores are more likely to turn and attack a predator than flee. These traits have put Aum-rhar's native life in high demand among those who enjoy challenging hunts. Tezcat have also exported many animals to their colony worlds, where they are kept in hunting parks. There has even been some trade in Aum-rhar herbivores as food animals to planets outside of the Solar Hegemony, although due to their aggressive nature, they are not as common as most other trade animals.



Raairvach

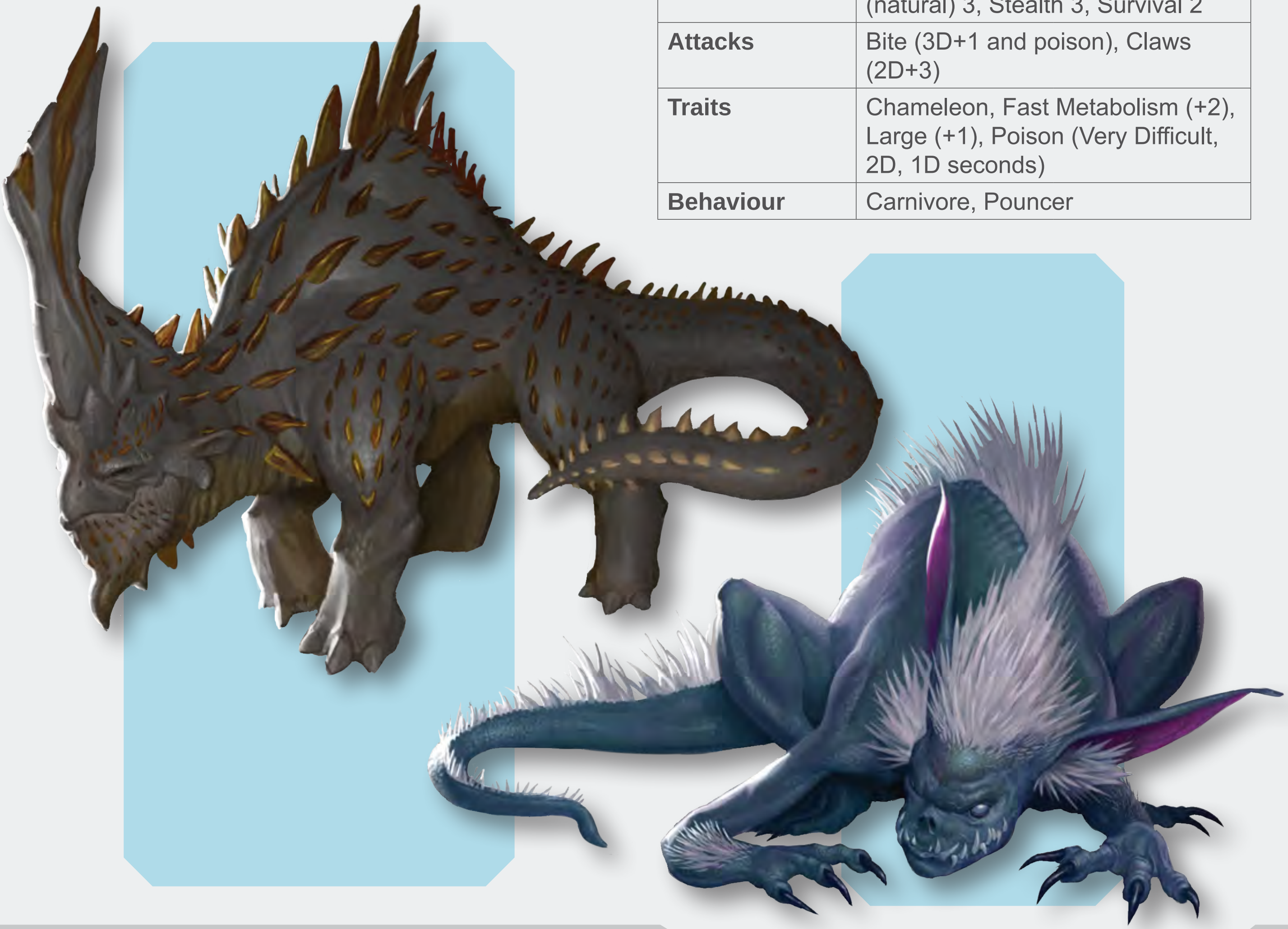
Raairvach are large solitary herbivores known for their foul temper and short fuse. Looking like a cross between a giant lizard and a rhinoceros, their backs and sides are covered with thick armoured plates ending in sharp spikes. A huge tapering horn grows from the top of the head, which the raairvach uses as its primary offensive weapon. Extremely short-sighted, raairvach will charge anything it views as a threat, goring it repeatedly with its horn until the target dies. Mothers with nursing young are extremely dangerous and even more short-tempered than usual. They are best avoided if possible.

Animal	Hits	Speed
Raairvach	61	7m
Skills	Athletics (endurance) 2, Recon 0, Survival 1	
Attacks	Horn (4D+3), Quills (2D), Trample (3D)	
Traits	Armour (+12), Large (+3)	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Grazer	

Terrondat

A savage cat-like solitary predator, the Terrondat is a distant relation to the Tezcat. Having a reputation as the most dangerous living predator on Aum-rhar, they are an endangered species, brought almost to extinction by Tezcat wishing to prove their bravery and hunting skills. The terrondat's back is protected with a pelt of thick quills which extend to the head and form a short bristly mane. The rest of the terrondat's skin is slate grey and furless, possessing chameleonic properties that allow it to blend easily into its surroundings. Its face is almost skull-like, with wickedly sharp exposed teeth dripping with virulent venom. Heavy paws with long claws round out this predator's arsenal. The beast hunts equally well from the branches of trees as the forest floor, hiding in plain sight via its chameleon skin and pouncing on unsuspecting prey. Once it has landed a venomous bite, the Terrondat will move out of reach of its prey and wait for the venom to finish it off.

Animal	Hits	Speed
Terrondat	33	12m
Skills	Athletics (dexterity) 2, Melee (natural) 3, Stealth 3, Survival 2	
Attacks	Bite (3D+1 and poison), Claws (2D+3)	
Traits	Chameleon, Fast Metabolism (+2), Large (+1), Poison (Very Difficult, 2D, 1D seconds)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Pouncer	

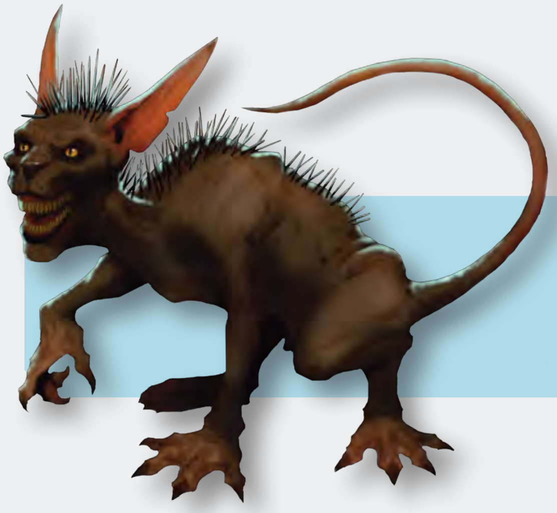


Tezheerekti

Tezheerekti are repulsive vermin found almost everywhere on Aum-rhar and have the dubious distinction of being the closest relative to Tezcat. They have spread to all worlds colonised by Tezcat and can even be found in the Third Imperium, Zhodani Consulate and the Vargr Extents.

About the size of a Terran cat, tezheerekti are cowardly predators, which, when solitary, will only attack prey much smaller than they are. In groups, tezheerekti will attack prey many times their size. They resemble their Tezcat cousins with large, pointed ears, sharp teeth and claws and a long flexible tail, and their skin bears the same chameleon abilities as Tezcat, with venom glands in their mouth which produce a mild poison. While they are hunters, tezheerekti are just as happy to survive on refuse and are known to be disease and pest bearers. Intelligent and cunning, reports have been made of some packs of tezheerekti making and using simple tools, meaning the species may be on the verge of entering the stone age.

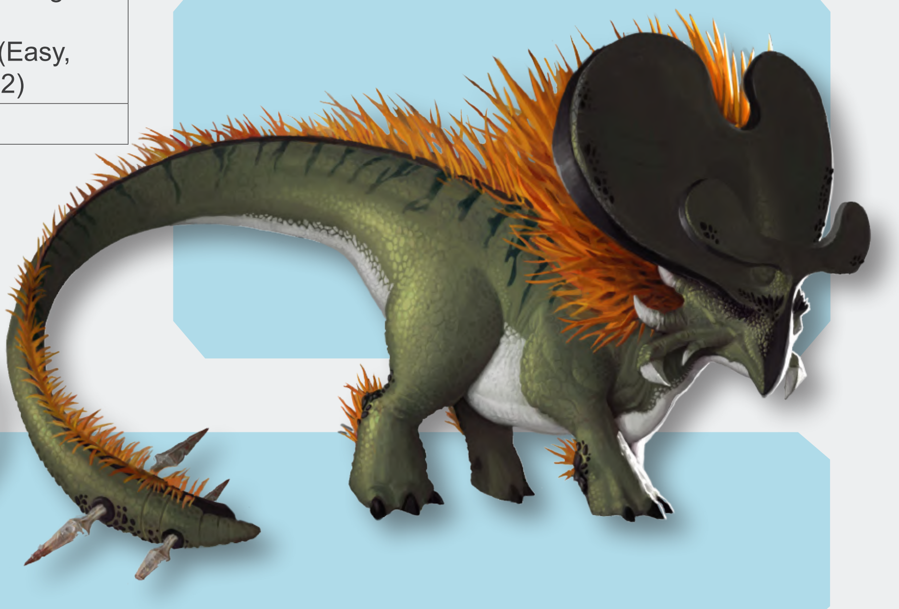
Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Tezheerekti	4	8m
Skills	Athletics (dexterity 1), Melee (natural) 1, Recon 0, Survival 4	
Attacks	Bite (1, poison), Claws (D3)	
Traits	Chameleon, Diseased (Average (8+), D3, 1D days), Fast metabolism (+3), Poison (Easy, D3, 1D minutes), Small (-2)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Carrion-Eater	



Vatyas

Vatyas are large herd creatures domesticated by prehistoric Tezcat as both beasts of burden and food. They resemble scaleless pseudo reptiles with a thick covering of long quills starting from their neck and extending to their heavy tail. The quills on the end of the tail have evolved into two pairs of thick spikes the length of a sword and make devastating weapons when swung. Their short legs end in wide feet with heavy blunt claws to support their weight. While its teeth are not sharp, vatyas can still inflict a painful bite. They possess short horns which grow from the cheeks just below the eyes, with males having larger horns. Males are also known for their quick tempers and possessing a thick v-shaped horn on their snouts which they use to pin threats while the rest of the herd attacks with their spiked tails.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Vatyas	55	5m
Skills	Athletics (endurance) 1, Melee (natural) 0, Recon 0, Survival 2	
Attacks	Bite (1D), Horn (4D+3), Tail Spikes (3D+3), Trample (4D)	
Traits	Armour (+2), Heightened Senses, Large (+3)	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Grazer	



Zhaat

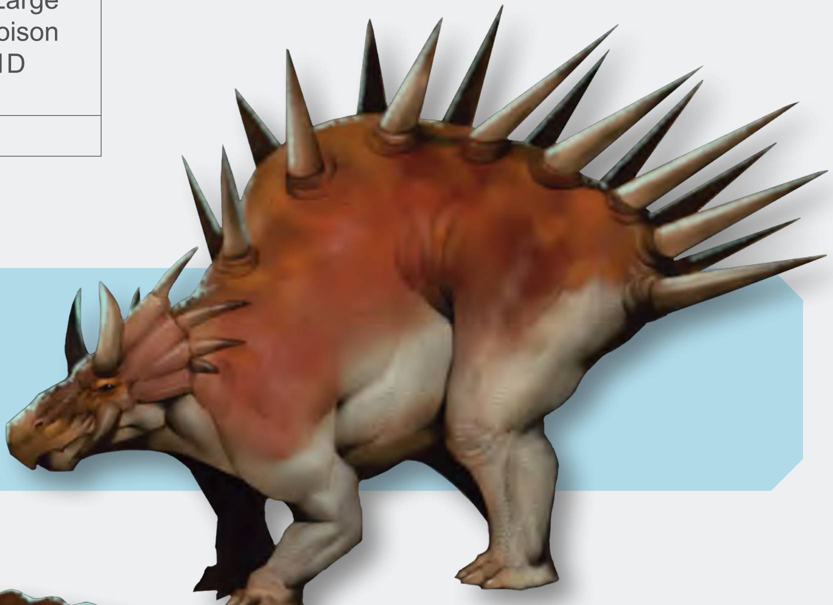
Zhaat are large carnivores known for eating carrion, offal, filth and anything else they can find. They have a squat scaley body with legs which stick out from the sides. It moves by either slowly walking or by ponderous leaps. Zhaat skin is protected by thick armour and can blend into the background, making it virtually invisible to casual observation. The blunt snout is full of sharp pointed teeth, many extending up and beyond the edge of the lips. Zhaat produce a potent venom which they can spit up to three metres away. If the poison hits the eyes, the target will be permanently blinded. Zhaat are reptilian amphibians who lay their eggs in water and then abandon them to hatch without legs and breathe water. The children slowly develop their legs and lungs, eventually allowing them to live on land when fully grown. Colonies of zhaat have been known to infest Tezcat city sewers and, when discovered, are hunted down mercilessly.

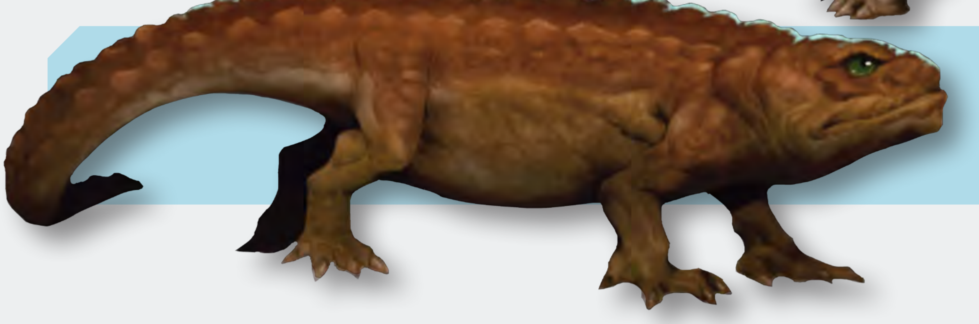
Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Zhaat	46	5m
Skills	Gun Combat (natural) 3, Melee (natural) 0, Recon 4, Survival 2	
Attacks	Bite (3D, poison), Claws (1D)	
Traits	Armour (+7), Camouflage, Large (+2) Heightened Senses, Poison (Difficult, 1D+3, blindness, 1D minutes)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Carrion-Eater	

Zianki

Large and heavy herbivores the size of Terran bison, zianki are a common Tezcat food animal. They have a tailless dinosaurian appearance, with a spiked armoured frill which protects the neck. The rear of the zianki is covered in long sharp spikes. When attacked, they turn away from their aggressor and expose their spiked back, making them a dangerous target for the unwary. Both males and females have horned heads – two sprouting from above their eyes and one from each side of their cheeks. Generally used by males in territorial fights during the mating season, the horns also make effective weapons in fending off attackers. Zianki travel in huge herds, migrating across a vast territory as they feed.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Zianki	47	7m
Skills	Melee (natural) 0, Recon 0, Survival 2	
Attacks	Horns (2D), Quills (1D+3), Trample (3D)	
Traits	Armoured (+5), Large (+2), Heightened Senses	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Grazer	





TEZCAT HISTORY

Tezcat are relative newcomers to the galactic stage but have managed to carve out a small interstellar empire for themselves, fight several wars and unite their world under one government.

Tezcat evolved from social hunting predators whose chameleon skin and poison fangs let them effectively ambush and bring down prey. While their physical abilities are fierce by Humaniti's standards, their homeworld Aum-rhar's fossil records suggest Tezcat were naked and unarmed compared to many of their planet's other prehistoric lifeforms. This forced them to rely on intelligent cooperation to survive. In fact, the Tezcat were the second species on Aum-rhar to develop intelligence, sharing the planet with the Varaku, a carnivorous type of amphibious pseudo-reptile.

PREHISTORY

Approximately 3,500,000 years ago, two species on Aum-rhar began evolving towards sophoncy. The species which would evolve into the Varaku ventured out from their aquatic homes and started a primarily land-based settlement. Alhough still tied to their lakes and swamps to reproduce, the proto-Varaku spread into the fog-shrouded forests for food. Unbeknownst to the proto-Varaku, they had ventured into the hunting territories of another predator, one that could change its skin colour and possessed a venomous bite – the proto-Tezcat. As the two species hunted the same prey animals, a direct competition was inevitable, placing evolutionary pressures on both species. The competition forced the proto-Tezcat out of their typical environment and the evolution of a larger brain to adapt to their changing conditions.

By -3000000, proto-Varaku had started to walk upright, freeing their hands to use rudimentary stone tools. At approximately the same time, they learned to build water-filled pools for their eggs and young, allowing them to move away from the waterways they had been tied to. Able to spread further inland, proto-Varaku continued to compete for territory and food with proto-Tezcat, pushing them out of their environment.

By -2000000, Tezcat ancestors diverged from the lineage, leading to Tezheerekti, the closest living relatives of modern Tezcat. Proto-Tezcat had also begun to walk upright and, perhaps imitating the Varaku, making and using simple stone tools, marking their entry into the palaeolithic era. The advent of tool use enabled proto-Tezcat to resist the Varaku with greater success but they were still at a disadvantage and had no choice but to disperse across the continent. At this stage, the Varaku had begun to use fire for heat, cooking and as a weapon. Tezcat would not start using fire until -150000.

Modern Tezcat emerged around -200000; by -10000, they had begun using shells, teeth and bone as jewellery. Sometime during this period, Tezcat developed syntactic language, dramatically improving their communication ability. Early artistic expression using bone and stone sculptures developed, implying the development of spirituality.

Tezcat continued to compete with Varaku. The more advanced pseudo-reptiles had already developed agriculture and the domestication of animals, while Tezcat were still primarily nomadic hunter-gathers; Varaku continued to spread across the continent, pushing the Tezcat before them. Conflicts between the two species continued, increasing in frequency and severity, but Tezcat nomads remained at a technological disadvantage to the Varaku.

By -8000, the surplus of food brought about by agriculture saw the development of the first Varaku cities. The Varuku became a TL1 society with the development of bronze, copper and tin working around -6200. During this period, the Varaku began enslaving Tezcat, forcing them to work in the fields and undertake menial tasks. Most Tezcat were still TL0 stone workers at this stage but those enslaved were exposed to the technology of the more advanced Varaku.

CRADLES OF CIVILISATION

The development of cities saw further advancements for the Varaku and, inadvertently, for their Tezcat slaves. Central governments, complex economic and social structures, record keeping and distinct cultures and religions developed independently and through cooperation. These advancements were followed by the invention of the wheel, mathematics, sailing boats and the potter wheel, which all led to the development of monumental buildings. By -2200, writing had been invented by at least three different Varaku cultures – Drupbla (-5400), Froppab (-4500) and Noorop (-2200).

Varaku continued to build their cities near waterways, despite being able to survive and reproduce away from them via breeding pools, as they facilitated transport via boats and rafts. The development of road construction began to connect settlements beyond rivers, promoting the projection of military power and furthering the sharing of goods, ideas and inventions. Trade rapidly became a power source as cities located near valuable resources or had control of important trade routes rose to dominance.

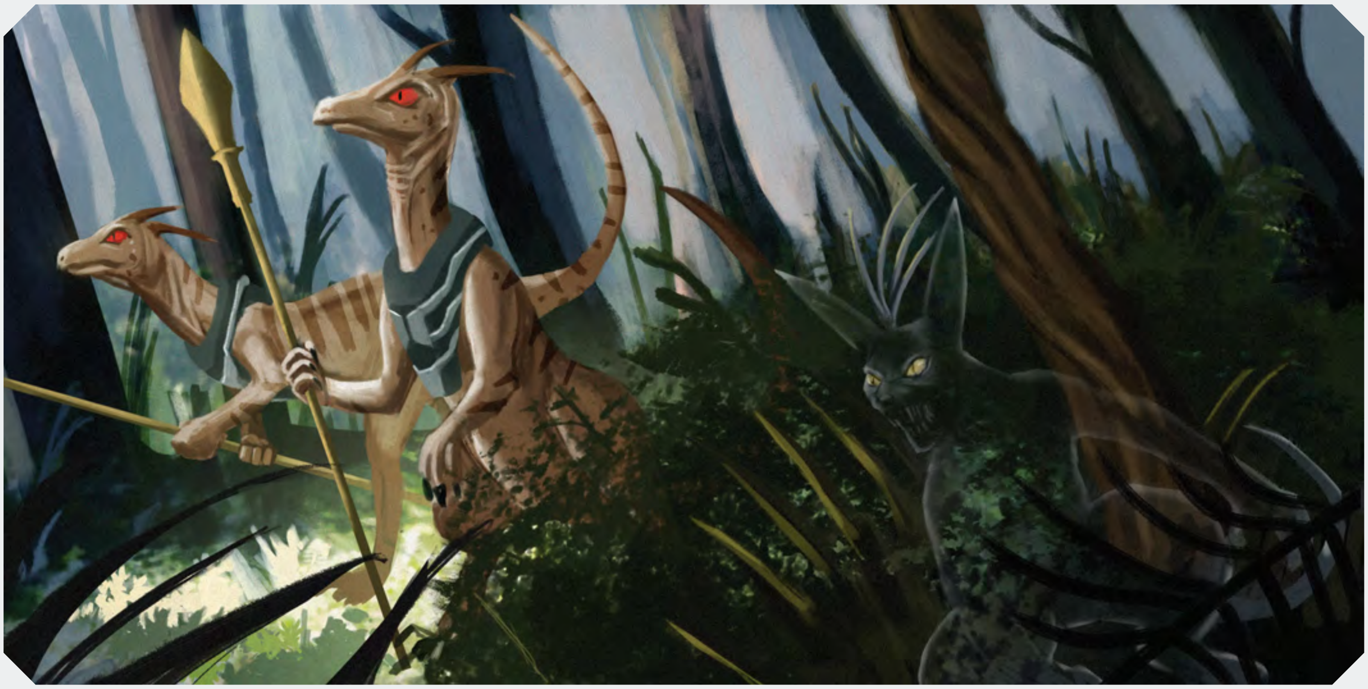
The growth of cities soon led to the establishment of states and empires. In Drupbla, the unification of several independent city-states saw the largest known empire of the period. Conversely, the independent city-states of Froppab formed a loose hegemony with control shifting from one city to another as they vied for supremacy.

Over the following millennium, Varaku civilisations developed and expanded over Aum-rhar. Tezcat continued to be enslaved, forcing those who avoided enslavement into less hospitable environments. Free Tezcat had yet to develop agriculture but had acquired animal husbandry. A few groups had learned the skills of bronze working. Some groups could flee on rafts and risked hazardous ocean voyages, migrating from island to landmass as they sought a home free of the Varaku.

Enslaved Tezcat, exposed to new ideas, developed a much better understanding of current technology but their quality of life was considerably inferior to free Tezcat. During this period, the concepts that would form the Shaper religion began to spread amongst Tezcat slaves.

THE RISE OF RELIGION

The rise of transformative philosophical and religious ideas in many different areas began in -2000. Several Varaku religions developed during this period. Most focused on the pantheons of gods but others encouraged new ways of thinking and living. Almost universally, these new ideas of the Varaku excluded Tezcat, with some teaching Tezcat were little better than animals, further reinforcing their position as slaves and chattel. In mimicry of their captors, religion also began to flourish among Tezcat, with different faiths forming and gaining footholds in various communities. In many Tezcat faiths, the belief in a saviour emerged who would lead Tezcat to victory and freedom from the Varaku.



From -1800, the rise of a series of Varaku empires of unprecedented size began. These great empires relied on strong militaries, the annexation of territories, the advancement of defended settlements into agricultural centres and the labour of Tezcat slaves. The use of well-trained armies, unifying religions and advanced bureaucracies paved the way for emperors to rule over vast areas whose subjects could attain numbers upwards of tens of millions. Trade continued to expand, connecting far-flung civilisations and furthering the spread of ideas and technology.

In -1500, the Brog Empire, the largest and most powerful Varaku civilisation, was founded with the aid of the discovery of iron working in the city of Brog. In -1200, the empire began expanding into nearby territories through conquest and alliances. In an unprecedented move, the Brog Empire utilised Tezcat slave soldiers in their armies, promising their freedom after 30 years of service. While Tezcat soldiers would be considered free at the end of their service, they were still inferior to their former masters, forced into menial jobs no one else wanted. This move, while bolstering the Brog Empire's armies, also provided Tezcat with military knowledge and skills which would eventually be used against their masters.

By -1050, the Brog Empire had encompassed the entire modern continent of Hrrsh'ta'au, having either absorbed or destroyed all opposing cultures. The invention of the printing press in -30 and ocean fairing sailing ships in -1020 ushered in TL2 for the Varuku. With the invention of astronomical navigation in -1015, the Brog Empire reached out across the oceans to lands beyond the horizon. By -997, the Brog Empire had conquered modern Mrran-gar and Vreesh and settled many islands in the Ktishh-rhar Ocean. By -950, the Brog Empire had contacted the Napbuup and Vurangor Empires in the distant southern Fa-hrai continent.

The expansion of the Brog Empire brought them into contact with many previously uncontacted Tezcat tribes, most of whom were still living at TL0 or 1. Contact invariably meant conflict between the two species, with the Tezcat at a woeful disadvantage. Captured Tezcat were sold at the multitude of slave markets across the Empire. Eventually, only in the frozen deserts far north of Hrrsh'ta'au, where it was too cold for Varaku, could Tezcat live a hard life of relative peace if not spirit-breaking hardship.

On Fa-hrai, Tezcat had fared little better. The Napbuup Empire saw little use for Tezcat as slaves, eradicating them as pests and vermin wherever they were found. The Vurangor used Tezcat slaves only for the most menial and degrading jobs, with no rights or chance of improving their lot. As on Hrrsh'ta'au, Tezcat on the southern continent had been pushed back into the most inhospitable of environments, the arid deserts and the frozen southern pole, to eke out what little existence they could.

The spread of the Brog Empire was halted when they met The Napbuup and Vurangor Empires. Both were powerful polities and the Brog Empire would be hard-pressed to conquer both, especially as they were strong trading partners and allies, likely to band together to oppose any conquest attempts. Furthermore, Napbuup had invented gunpowder and canons, a secret it jealously guarded, allowing the empire to destroy ships and route armies from a distance. Instead, the Brog Empire formed a trade relationship with its southern neighbours and hoped to obtain the secret of gunpowder through subterfuge.

THE POWDER KEG

The spread of the printing press helped the proliferation of information at a rate never seen before. Reading and writing saw a surge in uptake and were no longer the province of the educated few. By -920, the printing press could be found across civilised Aum-rhar, leading to the development of an education system comprising schools and universities. For the first time, an opportunity arose for primary education to be awarded to the young and advanced education for those who were talented or interested. New inventions such as the steam engine, calculus and the musket saw the stirrings of the industrial revolution for the Varaku.

Unbeknownst to the Varaku, with the spread of the printing press came the knowledge of a Tezcat faith – a cult that had begun in Brog with only a few scattered cells of followers. The religion preached a message of nihilism imposed by an entity known as the Absolute, the holiness of the Tezcat form and relegated the Varaku to the role of demons. The cult grew and gained followers among the downtrodden Tezcat who sought validation of their existence. The Varaku became aware of the faith and, alarmed by the cult's teachings, attempted to eradicate it by outlawing its practice and executing followers.

In -857, Vre'rhar was born to free Tezcat in Brog. She was raised by her parents in the Shaper Cult, unknowingly laying the foundations for her actions later in life.

The attempt to eradicate the Shaper Cult backfired and instead, the Varaku only succeeded in galvanising the Tezcat with a zealous obsession with their faith. In -887, Vre'rhar, now a young, charismatic advocate of the Shaper Cult, came to the fore in Brog city. She had claimed she had a vision where the Absolute had made itself known to her in the darkness of a yawning cenote and it had charged her with freeing all Tezcat from slavery. Vre'rhar preached the Shaper Doctrine and incited Tezcat with religious fervour to free themselves from the demons who had enslaved them. Vre'rhar travelled secretly to several Brog cities, her following growing exponentially as her message spread. Tezcat slaves began to refuse to obey their masters, soldiers abandoned and fled their posts, and freed Tezcat demanded equality for themselves and their enslaved brethren. Across the civilised Varaku world, revolts sprung up as Vre'rhar's impassioned words the Tezcat ears. The uprisings were quickly and bloodily quelled, they Vre'rhar's teachings continued to spread.

THE SPARK

In -883, authorities finally captured Vre'rhar and seven of her closest followers as they worshipped the Absolute around a deep secluded cenote outside the walls of Gluprobrob – known Ah'Purou in the modern day. After an obviously biased public trial at the cenote, Vre'rhar and her disciples were convicted of spreading a dangerous religion. They were sentenced to 'meet their maker' and summarily thrown into the cenote. The Tezcat who were forced to watch the trial and execution, already infuriated by the mistreatment afforded Vre'rhar, turned on their masters in a bloody riot which spread throughout the streets of Gluprobrob. Varaku blood ran through the streets as they were slaughtered by the thousands at the hands of slaves and free Tezcat. The sheer number of rioters made it impossible for the authorities to contain them. After eight days, the surviving Varaku governor of Gluprobrob decreed all Tezcat to be free from their bondage and could leave the city in peace.

Word swiftly reached the Brog Emperor of the uprising in Gluprobrob. Unrest had already begun among the Tezcat slaves and freemen as news of Vre'rhar's execution arrived. Leaders among the Tezcat, fashioning themselves after Vre'rhar, spoke out publicly, incited further disorder and demanded their cry for freedom where heard. Tezcat fury could not be contained and bloody clashes erupted on the streets as Tezcat turned on Varaku with righteous anger. The emperor ordered his armies to quell the uprising but the Tezcat slave soldiers turned on their Varaku officers, killing them and falling on the city to exact revenge on the Varaku within.

Horrified at the bloodshed, the Brog emperor freed all Tezcat in the empire in -881 on the proviso they leave Varaku cities in peace and start their own settlements elsewhere. The decree led to a mass exodus of Tezcat from Brog cities across the empire, leaving it struggling as it was bereft of its primary labour force.

Tens of millions of Tezcat found themselves suddenly free of their overlords but most were unsure of what to do with their freedom. Many Tezcat found their new freedom difficult. Food was not always easy to find and many turned to banditry to survive. The leaders who preached freedom and revolution led other groups of their people away from Brog cities to build their own settlements with the skills and knowledge they had gained during their indenture. A few found deep cenotes and, inspired by Vre'rhar's vision, settled near them. In time, these cenotes would become the sites of ritual sacrifice.

Seeing Vre'rhar as the prophesised saviour, the priests proclaimed her a martyr. They fashioned themselves after her and saw themselves as the force to drive their people. The scattered Tezcat settlements maintained contact with each other, primarily through the growing number of Shaper priests who were the cornerstones of the groups. The priests led the Tezcat, acting as guides but no single authority would lead them secularly. Each Tezcat had a say in how their society would operate and the majority would decide all secular decisions. The seeds of Tezcat democracy had been laid.

The Brog Empire did not fare well. The loss of its major labour force led to an economic downturn and depression. Untold numbers of smaller settlements were abandoned, no longer having the workforce to maintain them. Desperate Varaku travelled to the larger cities hoping to find a better life and found themselves performing the jobs Tezcat had performed, leaving them embittered and angry. If not for their technology and the industrial revolution the Brog Empire would have collapsed but it had significantly reduced in size and power.

SIMMERING TENSIONS

The news of the Brog Empire's plight eventually reached the continent of Fa-hrai in -880. It had little effect on the Napbuup Empire, although they took advantage of Brog's shrinking borders and sent aid to outlying settlements only to lay claim to them shortly after.

The Shaper Cult had not yet developed a firm grip on the Vurangor Empire's Tezcat population. Still, as stories of Vre-rhar reached them in -879, incidents of slave disobedience began to increase sharply. Disobedience soon led to open rebellion and armed conflicts between Tezcat and Varaku. Wary of what had occurred in the Brog Empire, the Vurangor Empire outlawed the Shaper religion and began removing the teeth and claws of rebellious Tezcat. The move served to cow some slaves but encouraged others to flee their masters. Some resorted to banditry, becoming a growing cancer in the body of the empire. Others attempted to find passage to the Brog Empire where they could be free. Of those who remained, they found their conditions becoming worse and worse. The empire produced propaganda that reviled the Tezcat, blaming them for the misfortunes of the empire, citing the events in the northern continent as evidence. In -878, Varaku slave owners were encouraged to have their slaves' teeth and claws removed to reduce their threat.

More slaves sought to escape. Those who were caught were publicly executed as an example to others. In -877, the Vurangor Empire began a two-pronged program aimed at vilifying Tezcat and using patriotic tautology to encourage Varaku to uptake the work once undertaken by Tezcat. The program proved to be an enormous success and in -875, the Vurangor Empire began collecting Tezcat and imprisoning them in barbaric slave camps where they were mistreated, experimented upon and killed.

During this time, the structure of the Shaper religion began to form among the freed Tezcat of the Brog Empire. The Shaper priests set down the doctrine of the religion based on the speeches and teachings of Vre'rhar, although there were many contradictions. The priests introduced ritual sacrifice as a punishment for criminals. The settlements surrounding cenotes drew Tezcat from all around who wanted to be closer to a place of sacrifice, helping the towns settled near them to grow into cities.

Peace reigned for the next half-century. By -820, the Brog Empire, while much reduced in size, had begun to recover. Trade and technology exchange with the Vurangor and Napbuup Empires aided in its stabilisation. The Brog Empire started to look towards expansion again, although it was not yet powerful enough to reclaim the lands taken from it by the Napbuup. Instead, they began to look at the territories claimed by the Tezcat as their own. Armies pushed outwards towards the north, where many Tezcat fled, but they failed to find significant communities. The ones they did find were isolated, small and easily conquered. Slowly, the Brog Empire's borders expanded again.

The Napbuup colonies on the northern continent had spread and grown as immigrants from the southern continent arrived, looking for new opportunities. Inevitably, as populations grew and spread, they once again encountered large Tezcat communities and conflict ensued. The Tezcat, with spears and swords, were initially disadvantaged by Napbuup muskets and cannons and suffered significant losses. The Varaku did not realise how well the larger Tezcat communities were connected and their assaults were soon met by reprisals from neighbouring communities using guerrilla tactics. The Tezcat guerrillas fended off the Napbuup advances, reclaiming what the Napbuup had only recently won. Unwilling to concede to the Tezcat, the Napbuup colonies called for an alliance with the Brog Empire and assistance from the Napbuup Empire. In -815, the two great empires began their assault on the Tezcat. The Wars of Extermination had begun.

THE WARS OF EXTERMINATION

The Wars of Extermination were fought for over two centuries, starting as minor skirmishes but rapidly growing into significant battles. Tezcat used captured Varaku muskets and cannons were used against their creators in frontal assaults while Tezcat guerrillas waged a war of attrition from the flanks and rear. At first, it appeared the Tezcat were losing ground, falling before the more advanced technology of the Varaku, but the Tezcat doubled back on their enemies and struck from behind.

Enflamed into a religious frenzy by their Shaper priests, what the Varaku saw as a war to gain territory, the Tezcat saw as a holy jihad of eradication. Ground was gained and lost but, despite their initial technological disadvantage, Tezcat pushed the back lines of combat. They invaded Varaku towns and cities and razed them to the ground. No Varaku was spared from Tezcat fury.

In -740, the Tezcat had successfully destroyed the Brog Empire and Napbuup colonies on Hrrsh'ta'au. The only Varaku left alive on the continent were in hiding. Others had successfully fled over oceans to seek safety on other continents and islands.

The Brog Empire was no more and the Napbuup Empire had retreated to their territories in the southern continent to regroup. The decades that followed were a period of uneasy peace, allowing the Tezcat to rebuild. New settlements were founded. In -735, a large group of Tezcat settled on the ruins of Brog, claiming it as their new capital and naming it and their nation A'Pur. Similar actions were taking place elsewhere on the continent, seeing the rise of the first Tezcat nations. With the new nations' growth, Tezcat could claim some of the Varaku technology left behind, raising them to TL3 and allowing them to better defend themselves against further Varaku attacks.

During this time, a gathering of Shaper priests took place to codify the Shaper religion. Texts were examined and compared, and the priests gathered a collection of scriptures to form the Shaper Doctrine. A council of Shaper high priests was created to act as the faith's governing body. The fundamental beliefs of the Shaper religion were established, including the sanctity of the Tezcat form, their divine creation and the demonising of the Varaku. Not all Shaper priests were happy with the outcome of the gathering and some left to form their own denominations.

The Shaper Church Council were not content with the knowledge of Varaku existing elsewhere. They called to the leaders of the new Tezcat nations to wage a holy war to eradicate the evil Varaku from the face of Aum-rhar. Many Tezcat men, women and even children took up the call to arms, their faith enflamed with religiously inspired hatred for the Varaku. By -732, massive Tezcat armies had formed and set sail for the continent of Fa-hrai.

The Varaku on Fa-hrai did not remain idle as the Tezcat established themselves. Technology continued to improve, slowly making its way to TL4. New inventions were primarily applied to military use. With advancements in metal technology, canons had become more reliable. Steam power was applied to create steam engines and early steam-powered tanks were developed while steam-powered ships patrolled the coastlines. Hot air balloons introduced the concept of airborne warfare.

Yet despite their technological superiority, the Varaku were no match for the Tezcat, who believed they had their god on their side. Losses on both sides of the war were vast as Fa-hrai was engulfed in the flames of war. The Tezcat fought a war of attrition, taking no prisoners and razing Varaku cities. Each Varaku loss left them less capable of recovery. Over the next half-decade, the Tezcat swept across the face of Fa-hrai and destroyed first the Napbuup Empire and then the Vurangor Empire. By -650, the vast majority of Varaku on Fa-hrai had been eliminated, leaving only small pockets of survivors to be hunted down and killed by Tezcat exterminators.

The Varaku had not yet been driven extinct, as there were still members of the species elsewhere on Aum-rhar. However, as each settlement was discovered, it was systematically destroyed and the inhabitants were killed. In less than another 200 years, the Varaku species would become essentially extinct, leaving a legacy of extreme xenophobia, which Tezcat would take to the stars.

THE DARK AGES

The War of Extermination did not come without a price for the Tezcat. The demands the war required in sheer manpower alone was crippling but the loss of Varaku knowledge of higher technology left the Tezcat victors unable to maintain it. As the war advanced on Fa-hrai, civilisation back on the Hrrsh'ta'au continent began to collapse. Knowledge and technology were slowly forgotten. The central authority began to break down, further accelerating the decline as nations fragmented into many small polities. Technology finally stabilised at TL1 and most Tezcat were reduced to subsistence living. The collapse followed the Tezcat across the ocean to the southern continent, driving the civilised world into a dark age.

Over this period, small polities continued to rise and fall. Warlords held territories through the strength of arms, warring against each other to increase their power. In A'Pur, the Shaper Church Council struggled to maintain the vestiges of civilisation of the fragmented Tezcat population, using their faith as a control rod. Yet, even this was hampered by the fragmentation of their own religion into sects of different faiths.

Gradually, the more powerful polities were able to gain a foothold. The Shaper Church of A'Pur regained its religious dominance. Sects with differing views were absorbed into the greater church or eradicated through holy wars and inquisitions. Agriculture, a science Tezcat had long ignored, increased the ability to maintain herds of food animals, leading to stable population growth. The increase in population and available food led to advances in technology. By -300, the Tezcat in Fa-hrai experienced a second industrial revolution.

THE AGE OF EXPLORATION

Over the next 200 years, stable nation-states emerged on both the Hrrsh'ta'au and Fa-hrai continents and TL4 was reached. Expeditions were sent to explore the rest of the world and colonies were settled on newly discovered lands. New Tezcat civilisations were discovered but none had achieved the technological sophistication found on Hrrsh'ta'au or Fa-hrai and were conquered or destroyed. Several powerful empires arose in this era, including the A'Pur Empire, the Chmee'kra Empire and the Khral'frep Empire.

A new colony, Hrag-rhar, was founded on the small continent Fshh'ta-ou in the southern hemisphere by religious dissidents from the Chmee'kra Empire. Tezcat from the A'Pur and Khral'frep empires seeking new opportunities also established colonies on the small continent. Fshh'ta-ou was not uninhabited – Tezcat living at TL1 already called the continent home. Initial contact between the colonists and the natives was friendly but relations soon broke down as the colonists claimed an expanding amount of territory. The natives could not compete with the more advanced colonists and while they resisted the expansion, they could not persevere. The natives were forced to adapt to the colonists' living or face extermination.

Technology continued to develop and advanced to TL5. In -100, the Chmee'kra colonies which had spread and grown sued for independence from the empire. The request was denied. In response, the colonies refused to pay taxes and declared themselves the independent nation of Fshh'ta-ou. Chmee'kra declared war on their upstart territories, believing it could easily defeat them. After five years of conflict, the Chmee'kra forces were expelled from the shores of Fshh'ta-ou and the empire acknowledged the independence of the Free States of Fshh'ta-ou.

RISE OF THE SUPERNATIONS

Several wars broke out on the continent of Hrrsh'ta'au as nations fought for dominance. The nation of A'Pur sought to bring the continent under a single government united by faith in the Shaper religion. War was waged across the continent for decades, ultimately seeing two nations absorbed into A'Pur Empire but leaving several others independent. The pressures of the war saw further technological advancement, bringing the A'Pur empire to the early stages of TL6.

Determined to see the continent united under it, A'Pur declared war on its neighbour nations once again. The remaining nations on Hrrsh'ta'au fought bravely for their freedom but the invention of the atom bomb brought A'Pur into military dominance. In -50, A'Pur used the bomb to simultaneously destroy the capital cities of their enemies and then stepped in to provide aid to the shattered nations, founding the Hrrsh'ta'au Union.

While Hrrsh'ta'au was engulfed in war, the various colonies on Fshh'ta-ou worked towards their own unification, led by the independent former Chmee'kra colonies. The western colonies became unified into the Western Fshh'ta-ou Union through negotiation and diplomacy but the eastern colonies refused to join. As diplomacy had proven unsuccessful, the only solution the Western Fshh'ta-ou Union could see was to forcibly absorb the eastern colonies and declare war. After seven years, peace was announced but the war united the wayward colonies into a federation called the Eastern Fshh'ta-ou Hegemony.

THE SPACE RACE

By the year 0, the Tezcat had achieved a mature TL6 and Aum-rhar was dominated by several powerful supernations – the Hrrsh'ta'au Union, the Western Fshh'ta-ou Union and the Eastern Fshh'ta-ou Hegemony. The nation of Rrssht'ma, located on a small continent in the northern hemisphere, had slowly grown in economic strength, profiting by supplying warring nations with much-needed supplies. In the southern hemisphere, the continent of Fa-hrai was splintered into many small independent states, one of which having economically prospered through the exploitation of vast oil reserves discovered on their lands.

Isolated from the conflict occurring elsewhere on Aum-rhar, Rrssht'ma embarked on achieving spaceflight as a matter of national security, successfully launching several ballistic rockets into near orbital space. Their success brought an announcement from the Hrrsh'ta'au Union, soon followed by the Western Fshh'ta-ou Union, the intention to launch artificial satellites into orbit within the year. By year 8, the Rrssht'ma sent the first Tezcat into space in an orbital flight lasting almost two hours before safely returning to the surface. The successful mission urged Hrrsh'ta'au and Western Fshh'ta-ou to push forward with their own attempts. Still, it would be after several more successful launches by Rrssht'ma that the other nations could complete a successful crewed orbit of the planet.

Also in the year 8, the Hrrsh'ta'au Union upped the stakes with their announcement to send a crewed mission to the moon Ilynd and safely return it to Aum-rhar within a decade. Both Rrssht'ma and Western Fshh'ta-ou made similar announcements shortly after. All three nations began developing the systems required for the project, leading to the development of early TL7 in year 12. Rrssht'ma successfully landed Tezcat on Ilynd in year 14. Successful landings were achieved by the other two nations over the next three years.

Space exploration continued with the construction of the first space station by the Rrssht'ma in the year 21, followed by a crewed orbital nuclear platform by Hrrsh'ta'au in year 22. The success of the orbital nuclear platforms saw a slight halt to further space exploration as all three nations launched several other orbital nuclear platforms as security measures.

In year 30, Western and Eastern Fshh'ta-ou completed the first lunar colony in a joint operation. The success of the mission led to Hrrsh'ta'au announcing its intention to send a crewed mission to T'chaia, the nearest planetary neighbour of Aum-rhar. The task would require technological advances they had yet to achieve but Hrrsh'ta'au was convinced they could launch the mission within 20 years. All three nations launched robotic probes to T'chaia and other planets during this period in their solar system.

Technology rapidly advanced to TL8. All three major nations were also involved in small wars prompted by economic concerns. The threat of nuclear war was raised several times but none were willing to risk mutual annihilation. Many smaller nations allied themselves with the superpowers to not be left behind in space exploration and to prosper by developing new technologies.

In year 54, a Hrrsh'ta'au crewed mission successfully landed on T'chaia. All the nations of Aum-rhar marked the event as a grand success. Over the next two centuries, the first crewed mission to T'chaia mission was followed by many others, culminating in permanent settlements. Robotic probes to both asteroid belts and four gas giants followed. Enormous wealth was discovered in the closest belt – the second belt was too far away to be economically viable – and asteroid mining was commenced by several Tezcat corporations. In 120, the colonies on T'chaia declared independence from their parent nations, creating the first Tezcat interplanetary nation. The colonisation of the nearest asteroid belt progressed quickly, providing raw material for Aum-rhar and T'chaia. The desire for faster interplanetary travel led inexorably to the invention of fusion power and, more importantly, gravitic technology.

INTERSTELLAR EXPLORATION

In 255, scientists on T'chaia invented the reactionless manoeuvre drive based on their understanding of gravitics. The invention resulted from looking for more fuel-efficient drive systems for the system's growing interplanetary community. The new drive was first used by the T'chaia navy, making their ships the most advanced in the system. It took only a few years before the other Tezcat nations made the same discovery through their own research or industrial sabotage.

Tezcat astronomy had advanced as quickly, if not more so, as their other sciences. Orbital observatories had already discovered thousands of worlds orbiting other stars. The closest star to Aum-rhar, an F5 V yellow-white main sequence sun, was only two parsecs away. It was known to be orbited by four gas giants and a rocky planet named Zamoran in the habitable zone. Further observations revealed the planet had an atmosphere which possessed oxygen. A ship could reach the planet in about 24 years using the new gravity manoeuvre drives.

Eastern and Western Fshh'ta-au announced their intention to send a joint colony to Zamoran, forgoing any exploratory robotic probes. Hrrsh'ta'au made the same announcement only hours later. The nations raced to be the first to launch their colonies, all three using espionage and economic pressures to sabotage each other's efforts. The tension caused by the delays soon devolved into a war between them.

On T'chaia, Tezcat scientists and corporations quietly built their own vessel to send a colony to Zamoran. A hollowed-out asteroid equipped with a manoeuvre drive would be spun up to create artificial gravity and the inside would be landscaped into a natural environment. The nations of Aum'rhar were too involved in the conflict between the superpowers to notice. In 260, the T'chaia colony ship was launched with 3,000 colonists on its epic 24-year flight to Zamoran.

The political tension on Aum'rhar boiled over during the colony ship's journey. The war between the Eastern and Western Fshh'ta-ou alliance and Hrrsh'ta'au grew, forcing the other nations to take sides. Aum'rhar was plunged into another world war as the threat of nuclear annihilation loomed. The Ilynd colonies and T'chaia were soon drawn into the conflict, which lasted 13 years. During this period, small tactical nuclear devices were utilised but all-out atomic war was successfully averted.

DROYNE!

The colonists heading for Zamoran were aware of the conflict engulfing their home system but they could do little about it. Their 24-year journey was not easy. Minor malfunctions in the workings of the colony ship led to larger ones. Maintaining the internal habitat proved more difficult than initially surmised and personal conflicts threatened to tear the small community apart. If it were not for the strong leadership of the handful of Shaper priests who were part of the colonisation effort, the ship might never have arrived at its destination.

Finally, in 284, the colony ship arrived in orbit around Zamoran. The new world was everything they could hope for – the atmosphere contained enough oxygen to breathe and an established ecosphere was apparent. As the colonists examined the planet from orbit, they were surprised by a small ship arriving from its surface. Unbeknownst to the Tezcat, Zamoran was a pastoral colony populated by Droyne.

At first, the colonists happily supposed the scientists back on Aum-rhar had developed a faster-than-light drive and their fellows had already colonised the planet. Communication was attempted but the language coming from the alien ship was incomprehensible. Through trial and error, the occupants of both vessels agreed to dock in space and meet face-to-face.

As the airlock to the alien craft opened, it revealed strange-winged creatures, unlike anything the Tezcat had ever seen. When the aliens removed their helmets, the Tezcat's horror intensified as the faces they saw reminded them of the Varaku – their racial enemy. Instinct overcame rational thought and the Tezcat attacked and killed the Droyne envoy. Storming the Droyne ship, they killed everyone they found aboard, leaving bloody, dismembered bodies in their wake. The Droyne, surprised by the Tezcat's sudden and ferocious reaction, did not have time to send a distress signal.

The Tezcat colonists sent a message back home, telling them of the alien monsters they had discovered and to send help. It was clear to them what was required. Like Aum-rhar before, Zamoran had to be cleansed of its unholy infestation. The Tezcat provided as much information in their message home as possible before launching their shuttles to the planet's surface to establish a beachhead for their assault.

More Tezcat were sent to the surface but were quickly overcome and killed. When no more Tezcat could be sent to the surface, Droyne Warriors attacked the colony ship in their few small warships. The colony ship had no weapons and was no match for the alien ships it faced. Attempting to flee, the colony ship was destroyed before leaving the system. The last action made by the crew of the colony ship was to send a message home of their failure. The conflict was short, ending with the complete extermination of the Tezcat colonists by Droyne Warriors.

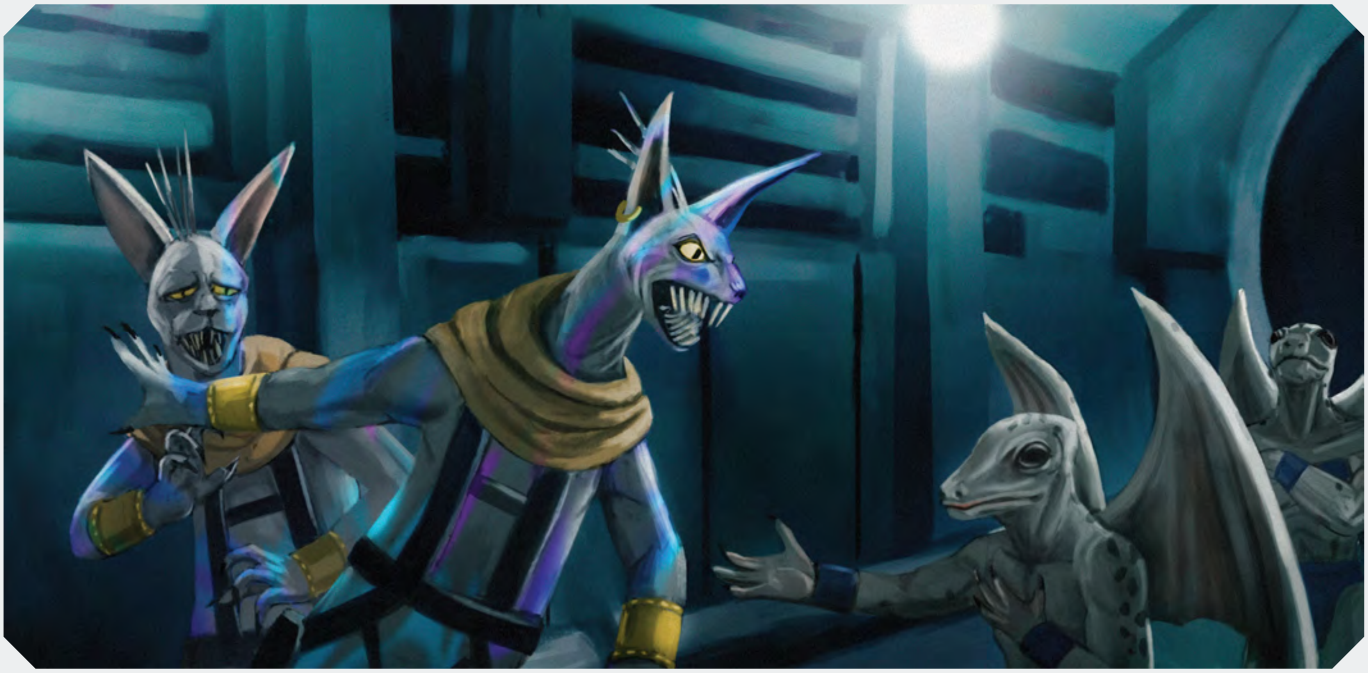
REPRISAL

News of the colony ship's fate took over seven years to arrive at Aum-rhar. The announcement of the discovery of the Droyne was enough to anger the Tezcat but knowledge of the destruction of their colony ship fanned a fury in them not felt since their ancestors exterminated the Varaku. It was enough to unite the bickering nations of the system. The construction of warships capable of taking the battle to the Droyne commenced, equipped with low berths capable of carrying thousands of Tezcat troops. In 301, the first assault fleet of 10 ships departed on the long voyage to Zamora, with more to follow in the coming years.

The combat fleet arrived in the Zamoran system in 325, with their power down and trajectories designed to make them look like comets entering from the Oort cloud. A few ships halted in orbits around the moons of the gas giants, forming a rear guard. The rest progressed towards the planet. The Droyne on Zamora, which they called Draykoysap, had few early warning systems available and the Tezcat fleet arrived in orbit unobserved. The troop craft landed far from the widely spaced Droyne city centres and established a foothold. From there, the Tezcat began a guerrilla war against the Droyne.

The first Tezcat assault was eventually repelled by Droyne Warriors forcing them back to their beachhead. A few Tezcat were captured to be questioned but the Droyne could not translate their language. Even their telepathy was unable to crack the Tezcat tongue. Having fought back the current attack, the Droyne Leaders mistakenly assumed the Tezcat were merely raiders and believed no more attacks would come.

Far more substantial fleets arrived, sometimes decades apart. Caught by surprise, the Droyne inadvertently allowed the Tezcat a foothold in the system, establishing a supply line. The war was prolonged by the snail's pace of Tezcat slower-than-light reinforcement and the local Droyne preference for a strategic defence over a vigorous counterattack. The Tezcat invasion was followed by a lengthy struggle to occupy and subdue the planet, hampered by limited experience in psionic shielding and having no psionics of their own. As a result, the Tezcat took decades to root out the last hidden Droyne enclaves and complete their destruction of the planet's Droyne population. Ultimately, in 475, after 150 years of war, the Tezcat were triumphant. The long, bitter conflict confirmed Tezcat xenophobia and added an additional prejudice against psionics that lingers today.



COMMUNITY AND EMPIRE

During their campaign to conquer Zamoran, the Tezcat swiftly learned the Droyne possessed a greater technological understanding than they did, especially in faster-than-light propulsion. The Tezcat successfully captured some Droyne starships during the war but could not dedicate much effort to understanding how they worked – they were far more interested in eradicating the Droyne. After the war, the Tezcat had the time and resources to thoroughly examine their captured vessels. Tezcat scientists were hampered by the way Droyne constructed their spacecraft. Each ship was different, individually built and apparently by hand. No two were alike, even in the design of their jump drives.

After 11 years, Tezcat scientists had succeeded in deciphering the workings of the Droyne ships and were ready to build their own vessel. Construction and testing of various configurations took another nine years, but in 500, a Tezcat starship successfully jumped from Zamoran to Aum-rhar, a journey of two parsecs taking only a week when in the past it had taken more than two decades. Tezcat scientists learned more than just the secrets of the jump drive from captured Droyne technology, and the new knowledge raised the Tech Level of Aum-rhar to 11.

The long war with the Droyne had created a period of unprecedented cooperation among the nations of Aum-rhar. The world's governments agreed the knowledge of the jump drive was far too important to be kept in the hands of a single nation. The knowledge was shared with all the nations in the Aum-rhar system but only the superpowers had the resources to benefit from it. As the more powerful nations concentrated on exploring and colonising space, the smaller nations returned to petty bickering and conflicts, occasionally drawing in the more powerful nations to intervene.

Equipped with copies of the Droyne jump drive, the Tezcat expanded into the stars. Their progress was slow, hampered by the sparsity of stars of the Rift, but between 500 and 700, they spread through Reft, laid claim to new systems and conquered others. Tezcat merchant cruisers and missionary scouts equipped for multiple successive jumps even penetrated Trojan Reach, Vanguard, Riftspan Reaches and the Beyond sectors, occasionally being mistaken for Aslan ihatei.

When the Tezcat arrived at Gordon (Reft 2609), they discovered the planet was already colonised by humans of Imperial descent, although it was never part of the Third Imperium. The planet only had a small population of 12,000, so the Tezcat invaded but the humans put up a surprising resistance, managing to fend off the Tezcat's superior numbers several times. Gordon was finally conquered in 613, adding a new world to the growing Tezcat empire. In a show of respect for the brave resistance presented by the human inhabitants, the Tezcat retained the planet's name.

Undrelyn (Reft 1812) was a trading post established by a disgraced Aslan minor clan seeking its fortune in the Rift. The Tezcat made several attempts at conquering it before succeeding in 693; however, many Aslan avoided capture and continued to resist the invaders through guerrilla warfare. The control of Undrelyn would change several times over the coming two centuries.

By 700, Tezcat had control of five planets. They encountered most of the Major Races, fought skirmishes with Aslan minor clans and human colonies, and carved out a small pocket empire. At the same time, the Third Imperium was distracted by the Second Frontier War and Civil War.

While Tezcat were not pleased to find themselves hemmed in by more powerful alien powers, they were nevertheless relieved to learn not all alien species were psionic monsters like the now-legendary Droyne. However, reports of the Zhodani (carried to them by Aslan traders) unnerved them. The Tezcat's Imperial and Aslan neighbours have found the xenophobic species a sometimes-useful buffer and a good source of mercenaries.

The sporadic conflict between Tezcat and the other client states and pocket empires of the Great Rift would continue for several centuries but there would be no significant changes in borders. Regarding their larger and more powerful neighbours, the Tezcat have convinced them they are too prickly a pear to swallow.

UNITED WORLD GOVERNMENT

The nations of Aum-rhar continued to be at odds with each other even as the Tezcat empire expanded to the stars. Finally, in 920, after years of conflict, the A'Pur culture of the Hrrsh'ta'au continent succeeded in forming a world government. Over the next decade, the Aum-rhar delegates to the lower house of the Solar Hegemony were replaced with those from the A'Pur culture and the empire fell under their control.

In 997, the Tezcat wrested control of the Undrelyn from the Aslan again. The final battle saw most of the Aslan resurgents killed but the planet remained a potential flash point as other Aslan clans would find retaking it a worthy challenge. As a protective measure, Undrelyn would remain heavily garrisoned by Tezcat troops.

MODERN DAY

The Tezcat continue to believe the universe would be better if it were not so diverse but they have learned patience, and their more extreme elements have found solace in mercenary service. Tezcat mercenaries are successfully employed by both human and Aslan polities against Zhodani client states and each other, especially during the Frontier Wars. So be it if Tezcat must serve lesser evils to remove greater ones. Ultimately, Tezcat believes their foes' weaknesses will be revealed and they will have their day.

TEZCAT TIMELINE

The following gathers together some of the important dates and events in Tezcat history.

Date	Event
-3500000	Proto-Varaku emerge as a direct result of competition with other predatory species in the forests and swamps of Aum-rhar.
-3000000	Proto-Varaku begin to walk upright.
-2000000	Tezcat ancestors diverge from the lineage which would become their closest living relatives because of direct competition with Proto-Varaku.
-200000	Modern Tezcat emerge.
-150000	Tezcat begin using fire.
-100000	Tezcat begin using shells, teeth and bone as jewellery.
-100000	Tezcat first use syntactic language.
-8000	Varaku build first cities and enslave Tezcat.
-8000	Tezcat achieve TL0.
-6200	Varaku achieve TL1.
-5400	Drupbla culture develops writing.
-4500	Froppab culture develops writing.
-2200	Noorop culture develops writing.
-2000	Varaku develop transformative philosophies, many teaching Tezcat are little better than animals.
-2000	Varaku continue to expand across the continent and drive the Tezcat out.
-1800	The rise of Varaku empires of unprecedented size.
-1500	The Brog Empire founded with the discovery of ironworking.
-1200	Brog Empire begins expanding and using Tezcat slave soldiers in their armies.
-1050	Brog Empire has spread to encompass the entire continent.
-1020	Brog Empire invents astronomical navigation.
-1020	Brog Empire achieves TL2.
-997	Brog Empire has expanded across the ocean, conquering and absorbing other Varaku cultures.
-920	Invention of the printing press spread across most Varaku civilised cultures.
-920	Shaper Cult begins to secretly spread among Tezcat slaves.

Continue

-920	Alarmed by the doctrine of the Shaper Cult, Varaku cultures attempt to eliminate it by executing adherents.
-857	Vre’rhar born in Brog.
-887	Cultural and Shaper hero Vre’rhar experiences a vision of the Absolute and begins secretly travelling around the Brog Empire telling what she has seen.
-883	Vre’rhar captured and executed for spreading a dangerous religion.
-883	Tezcats of Brog riot in the streets of Gluprobrob.
-883	Brog emperor frees all Tezcat slaves.
-883	Tezcat begin a mass exodus from the Brog Empire to build their own communities.
-879	News of the Tezcat revolt reaches the Vurangor Empire, inciting unrest in the slaves.
-879	Vurangor outlaws the Shaper religion.
-878	Vurangor citizens are encouraged to have the teeth and claws of their slaves removed.
-877	Vurangor spreads propaganda against Tezcat and encourage Varaku patriotism.
-875	Vurangor government begins rounding up Tezcat slaves and placing them in slave camps.
-820	Brog Empire recovers from the economic loss of freeing the Tezcat slaves but is reduced in size.
-820	The northern Napbuup colonies have spread, encountering Tezcat communities.
-815	The Brog Empire and Napbuup colonies begin their attacks on the free Tezcat communities, sparking the Wars of Extermination.
-740	Tezcat succeed in destroying both the Brog Empire and Napbuup colonies.
-735	The city of Brog is settled by free Tezcat, renaming it and their new nation A’Pur.
-735	Tezcat begin settling other destroyed Brog cities and found new nations.
-735	Shaper priests codify the Shaper religion and form the Shaper Church Council for its leadership. Schisms appear in the priesthood causing the formation of different denominations of the faith.
-735	Shaper priests call for Jihad against all Varaku.
-732	Tezcat armies set sail for the continent of Fa-hrai.
-732	Varaku on Fa-hrai achieve TL4.
-650	Majority of Varaku on Fa-hrai have been eliminated.
-650	War with the Varaku causes a decline in technology and a collapse of civilisation, eventually stabilising at TL1.
-650	Many small Tezcat polities rise and fall.
-450	Varaku have been rendered extinct.
-300	Tezcat on the continent of Fa-hrai experience the industrial revolution and enter TL4.
-250	A’Pur, Chmee’kra and Khral’frep empires rise to significance.
-200	Hrag-rhar colony founded on the continent of Fshh’ta-ou by religious dissidents from the Chmee’kra Empire.
-200 to -100	Colonists from various Tezcat cultures settle on the continent Fshh’ta-ou.
-100	TL5 reached.
-100	Chmee’kra colonies on Fshh’ta-ou sue for independence, sparking a war between the colonies and empire.
-95	Chmee’kra colonies win the war for independence and found the nation of the Free States of Fshh’ta-ou.
-50	Wars for dominance on the continent of Hrrsh’ta’au advance technology to TL6.

Continue

-50	A'Pur uses atom bombs to destroy the capital cities of enemy nations, conquering them and forming the Hrrsh'ta'au Union.
-50	Western Fshh'ta-ou Union founded and wages war on the eastern colonies of Fshh'ta-ou.
-43	War on Fshh'ta-ou ends.
0	Aum-rhar dominated by the Hrrsh'ta'au Union, Western Fshh'ta-ou Union and Eastern Fshh'ta-ou Hegemony superpowers. Rrssht'ma had achieved economic importance.
0	Rrssht'ma begins work on sending missions to space, sparking a space race among the superpowers.
8	Rrssht'ma successfully sends the first Tezcat into orbit.
8	Hrrsh'ta'au Union announces their intention of sending a manned mission to the moon.
11	Other nations successfully land Tezcat on the moon.
12	TL7 achieved.
14	Hrrsh'ta'au Union succeeds in landing Tezcat on the moon and returning them safely to Aum-rhar.
21	Rrssht'ma places the first space station in orbit around Aum-rhar.
22	Hrrsh'ta'au places first crewed nuclear platform in orbit around Aum-rhar.
30	Western and Eastern Fshh'ta-ou place first colony on the moon.
30	Hrrsh'ta'au announces its intention to send a crewed mission to the nearest planet, T'chaia.
54	TL8 achieved.
54	Hrrsh'ta'au successfully land Tezcat on the surface of T'chaia.
120	T'chaia colonies declare their independence from Aum-rhar.
154	Aum-rhar solar system explored and asteroid mining is providing Tezcat with wealth and resources.
255	TL9 reached.
260	Developed STL flight and makes the 70 year journey to Draykoysap.
260	T'chaia colonies send an STL colony ship to the nearest solar system.
284	T'chaia colony ship arrives at Zamoran and discover it is populated by Droyne.
284	T'chaia colony ship destroyed by Droyne warriors.
291	News of the destruction of the T'chaia colony on Zamoran arrives at Aum-rhar, sparking a war against the Droyne.
301	First Tezcat war fleet sent to Zamoran.
325	Tezcat war fleet arrives in Zamoran.
475	Tezcat win the war with the Droyne and settle Zamoran.
486	Tezcat scientist reverse engineer the Droyne jump drive.
500	TL11 achieved.
500	First Tezcat ship jumps from Zamoran to Aum-rhar.
500	Tezcat begin exploring Reft sector and beyond.
613	Gordon conquered.
650	Tezcats control an empire consisting of six worlds.
700	Tezcats stop their spread through interstellar space and concentrate on securing their empire.
920	Aum-rhar forms a world government.
997	Undrelyn successfully claimed by the Solar Hegemony.
1105	Current day.

TEZCAT TRAVELLERS

Tezcat Travellers follow the same procedures and concepts as human Travellers, as detailed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*.

TEZCAT

Tezcat Travellers have the following modifiers to their characteristics: DEX +1, END -1.

TEZCAT TRAITS

Tezcat Travellers all possess the following traits:

Chameleon: Tezcat skin can mimic the colours of their surroundings, providing a natural form of camouflage and allowing them to blend in with their environment. This ability is instinctive and operates automatically while the Tezcat is conscious. Tezcat gain DM+2 to all Stealth checks. As Tezcat also use their ability to shift colour as an unconscious form of body language, they find lying to each other very difficult. Tezcat attempting to lie to another Tezcat receive DM-2 to their Deception check.

Fast Metabolism: Tezcat have a heightened metabolism and very fast reactions. They gain DM+1 to all Initiative rolls.

Heightened Senses: Tezcat eyes are adapted to low lighting but sensitive to bright light. They gain DM+1 to all checks requiring sight in low-light, although not in total darkness. They receive DM-1 to all checks requiring sight when in light equivalent to a Terran sunny day unless they are wearing eye protection. Tezcat also have more sensitive smell, hearing and taste to humans, granting them DM+1 to any Recon or Survival checks which use one of those senses.

Manual Dexterity: Tezcat have very fine motor control in their hands and fingers, enabling them to perform the most delicate operations without artificial aid. All Tezcat gain DM+2 to any check which requires the use of fine manipulation.

Natural Weapons: All Tezcats have very sharp teeth and claws, which make for nasty close combat weapons. Their claws do 1D+1 damage while their bite does 1D+2 damage. Furthermore, Tezcat possess venom glands in their mouth and can deliver the venom through a bite. If the Tezcat's bite penetrates armour, the victim must succeed at an Average (8+) END check or take an additional D3 damage with intervals of 1D minutes. Tezcat are immune to their own venom if ingested but not if they suffer a bite.

TITLES

Tezcat do not use noble titles. Their SOC characteristic represents the respect their position in society affords as well as an indication of their relative wealth.

BACKGROUND SKILLS

Tezcat Travellers gain 3+ EDU DM in background skills. They may choose the background skills available in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*, page 9. Tezcat must choose the Gun Combat 0, Melee 0 and Stealth 0 background skills first and can use the remaining number of background skills to choose the other available options.

PRE-CAREER EDUCATION

Tezcat Travellers may use the Pre-Career Education options from the *Traveller Core Rulebook*, page 16, choosing university or military academy.

THE DRAFT

Most Tezcat Travellers enter the draft as soon as they become adults, as once they leave public service they are eligible to vote and hence have an impact on society.

CAREERS

Tezcats can enter any career in the *Traveller Core Rulebook* except for Noble, as their democratic society does not acknowledge any group of people as being better or more important than another.

Tezcat who wish to join the armed forces may choose an Army, Marine or Navy career, or choose the Soulhunter career detailed in this chapter. Those interested in religious study may choose to enter the Shaper priest career, also detailed in this chapter.

Careers

Career	Assignment	Qualification	Survival	Advancement
Shaper priest		INT 6+		
	Academic		EDU 4+	EDU 8+
	Ecclesiastic		INT 4+	SOC 7+
	Partisan		END 6+	INT 6+
Soulhunter		END 6+		
	Flight		INT 5+	EDU 7+
	Commando		END 6+	EDU 6+
	Support		END 5+	EDU 7+

AGEING

Tezcat ageing is the same as standard, commencing ageing rolls at the age of 34 (at the end of their fourth term).

TEZCAT LIFE EVENTS

The life events of Tezcat are similar to those of humans. Use the Life Events table in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*, page 46.

MUSTERING OUT

Tezcat Travellers use the mustering out system as detailed in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*.

ROLEPLAYING TEZCAT

The two things which identify Tezcat are their xenophobia and faith. While not all Tezcat exhibit these characteristics at the same intensity, they are always present to some degree. Even the most widely travelled Tezcat will feel at least somewhat ill at ease around sophonts which look very different to them and more comfortable around sophonts which hold truer to the Tezcat form. Tezcat who have a lot of interaction with other sophonts tend to be not as xenophobic as those who have never seen a Hiver or K'Kree but there are exceptions.

Tezcat are well known for their faith. Like their xenophobia, individuals will differ in how they feel towards their religion – some have a very relaxed belief while others are zealous in their faith. Many Tezcat abide by the laws of their religion easily as they go about their lives but there are others who chafe against them as impositions and roadblocks for their ambitions. Most dangerous are the Tezcat who are zealots and obnoxiously insist that others not of their faith follow Shaper doctrine. Rare is the Tezcat who has completely turned their back on religion, even if their belief extends to only empty lip service.

It is very common to hear Tezcat refer to their deity in everyday conversation and asking for blessings for upcoming actions and endeavours. They frequently add '*if Kn-krutak wills it*' to statements of uncertainty or hope, adding remarks such as '*Kn-krutak is all*' and '*all things come to Kn-krutak*' as signs of virtue, even asking Kn-krutak to inflict disease, bad luck and misfortunes on those who have wronged him.

Among themselves, Tezcat are very affectionate and are not afraid of, or embarrassed by, public displays of affection. Tezcat do not show affection to other sophonts and tend to keep them at arm's length, sometimes at very long arm's length. The very idea of being affectionate to another species is abhorrent to most Tezcat. Of course, there are exceptions for sophonts who Tezcat believe have been born in the wrong body and they will do their utmost to convince them to be Incarnated into their true selves.

Tezcat release stress and tension through spontaneous play. One moment they will be performing maintenance on a jump drive, the next they will suddenly break into a game of chase or pounce on invisible prey and tear around the area in a burst of frenzied activity. Tezcat do not behave in this manner in dangerous situations or while in combat but once a threat has passed they will drop everything for a game.

Tezcat do not show their teeth when they smile as it is seen as a threat and indication of imminent attack. They find it confusing when other species show their teeth in a smile and often confuse it with a threatening gesture until they have learned better. Even Tezcat who have spent a lot of time with other sophonts and know a toothy grin is not a threat automatically become defensive when smiled at and have to force themselves to relax.

1 SHAPER PRIEST

Shaper priests are the clergy of the Shaper Church and guide Tezcat in spiritual and worldly matters, proselytise the faith and punish the sinful.

Qualification: INT 6+
DM-1 for every previous career.

ASSIGNMENTS

Choose one of the following:

Academic: You pursue your faith through study and further understanding of the world around you.
Ecclesiastic: You bring the teachings of the church to your followers.
Partisan: You are the military arm of the church, enforce its laws and defend the faith.

CAREER PROGRESS

	SURVIVAL	ADVANCEMENT
Academic	EDU 4+	EDU 8+
Ecclesiastic	INT 4+	SOC 7+
Partisan	END 6+	INT 6+

MUSTERING OUT BENEFITS

1D	CASH	BENEFITS
1	Cr1000	EDU +1
2	Cr2500	INT +1
3	Cr5000	SOC +1
4	Cr10000	A prominent statue and SOC +1
5	Cr25000	3 Ship Shares
6	Cr50000	SOC +2
7	Cr75000	SOC +2 and 3 Ship Shares

SKILLS AND TRAINING

1D	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	SERVICE SKILLS	ADVANCED EDUCATION (MIN. EDU 8+)
1	INT +1	Profession (religion)	Profession (religion)
2	EDU +1	Science (shaper church)	Science
3	SOC +1	Admin	Medic
4	Science (shaper church)	Diplomat	Investigate
5	Profession (religion)	Persuade	Advocate
6	Persuade	Electronics (computer)	Electronics (computer)

1D	ACADEMIC	ECCLESIASTIC	PARTISAN
1	Admin	Profession (religion)	Advocate
2	Advocate	Science (shaper church)	Gun Combat
3	Science	Persuade	Melee
4	Science	Admin	Tactics (military)
5	Electronics (computer)	Leadership	Recon
6	Science	Deception	Stealth

RANKS AND BONUSES

RANK	ACADEMIC/ECCLESIASTIC	SKILL OR BONUS	RANK	PARTISAN	SKILL OR BONUS
0	Novice	—	0	Least Claw	—
1	Initiate	Science (shaper church)	1	Third Claw	Gun Combat 1
2	Acolyte	Persuade	2	Second Claw	Leadership 1
3	Priest	—	3	First Claw	—
4	High Priest	SOC +1	4	Kaltrhar	Tactics (military) 1
5	Prelate	—	5	Shilahn	—
6	Primate	SOC +1	6	Shil Shintrah	SOC +1

EVENTS

2D	EVENT
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You are involved in good works in the community gaining the respect of a large segment of society. Gain SOC +1 and an Ally.
4	A notable academic consults with you about a publication or documentary they are working on. Gain a Contact in academia.
5	You are sent to a new community or parish to preach Shaper doctrine among the poor. Gain either Streetwise or Persuade.
6	You retreat from the mundane world for a time in the hope of a revelation, although this affects your work and relationships. Lose SOC -D3 but gain D3 Benefit rolls and DM+1 on these and all future Benefit rolls.
7	Live event. Roll on the life event table.
8	You are chosen to represent the Shaper Church in a vid show or other highly public forum. Gain either Carouse or Persuade.
9	You are offered inducements to betray the Shaper Church. If you do so, you must leave this career and lose all Benefit rolls but gain Cr10000x2D per Benefit roll you lose. If you choose not to sell out, gain 1D Enemies.
10	A leader or other important personage confides in you about their highly damaging indiscretions. If you keep their confidence, you gain them as an Ally. If you choose to use the information for your own benefit, you gain them as an Enemy and an additional D3 Benefit rolls.
11	Someone more charismatic but less devout than you has become your superior. All future advancement rolls are subject to DM-1.
12	Your faith enjoys an explosion of popularity largely thanks to your efforts. You are immediately promoted one grade and gain DM+1 on all future advancement checks.

MISHAPS

1D	MISHAP
1	Opponents of your belief system ambush you. You must roll on the injury table and leave this career.
2	You aid a follower back to the True Path but this angers a friend or relative. Gain an Enemy.
3	You are caught in a scandal. Lose 1 rank and Benefit roll but you are not ejected from this career.
4	You have been following false teachings! Lose 1 skill level from either Profession (religion) or Science (shaper church) and leave this career.
5	Your faith is shaken. Lose all Benefit rolls gained thus far in this career but you do not have to leave this career.
6	You come into conflict with a splinter group of the Shaper Church which maintains your version is the wrong one. Gain D3 Rivals.

2 SOULHUNTER

An elite military force of the Solar Hegemony, soulhunters are a combined naval and marine force charged with invasions and strike missions into enemy territory.

Qualification: END 6+
DM-1 for every previous career.
DM-2 if you are aged 30 or more.

Commission: INT 8+

ASSIGNMENTS

Choose one of the following:

Commando: You are trained to fight both boarding and ground actions.
Flight: You pilot one of the many vessels of the Solar Hegemony fleet.
Support: You are a specialist technician, engineer or battlefield support in the Solar Hegemony fleet.

CAREER PROGRESS

	SURVIVAL	ADVANCEMENT
Commando	END 6+	EDU 6+
Flight	INT 5+	EDU 7+
Support	END 5+	EDU 7+

MUSTERING OUT BENEFITS

1D	CASH	OTHER BENEFITS
1	Cr1000	Personal Vehicle or Ship Share
2	Cr5000	INT +1
3	Cr5000	EDU +1 or Two Ship Shares
4	Dr10000	Weapon
5	Cr20000	Armour
6	Cr50000	Ship's boat or Two Ship Shares
7	Cr50000	SOC +2

SKILLS AND TRAINING

1D	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	SERVICE SKILLS	ADVANCED EDUCATION (MIN. EDU 8+)	OFFICER (COMMISSIONED ONLY)
1	STR +1	Pilot	Medic	Leadership
2	DEX +1	Vacc Suit	Survival	Electronics
3	END +1	Athletics	Explosives	Pilot
4	INT +1	Gunner	Navigation	Melee (natural)
5	EDU +1	Mechanic	Admin	Admin
6	SOC +1	Gun Combat	Engineer	Tactics

1D	COMMANDO	FLIGHT	SUPPORT
1	Vacc Suit	Pilot	Electronics
2	Stealth	Astrogation	Mechanic
3	Gunner	Gunner	Engineer
4	Melee	Electronics	Medic
5	Electronics	Flyer	Vacc Suit
6	Gun Combat	Vacc Suit	Explosives

RANKS AND BONUSES

RANK	COMMANDO/FLIGHT	SKILL OR BONUS	RANK	SUPPORT	SKILL OR BONUS
0	Least Claw	—	0	—	—
1	Third Claw	Mechanic 1 or Gun Combat 1	1	Kaltrhar	Melee (natural) 1
2	Second Claw	—	2	Shin Kaltrhar	Leadership 1
3	First Claw	Leadership 1	3	Shilahn	—
4	Third Fang	—	4	Shiltrhar	Tactics 1
5	Second Fang	END +1	5	Shil Shintrah	Admin 1
6	First Fang	—	6	Shinalrhar	SOC +1

EVENTS

2D	EVENT
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from this career.
3	Trapped behind enemy lines, you have to survive on your own. Gain one of Survival 1, Stealth 1, Deception 1 or Streetwise 1.
4	You are assigned a special assignment or duty on board your ship. Gain DM+1 to any one Benefit roll.
5	You are given advanced training in a specialist field. Roll EDU 8+ to gain one skill of your choice at level 1.
6	Your vessel participates in a notable engagement. Gain one of Electronics 1, Engineer 1, Gunner 1 or Pilot 1.
7	Live Event. Roll on the Life Events table.
8	You are on the front line of an assault and occupation. Gain one of Recon 1, Gun Combat 1, Leadership 1 or Electronics (comms) 1.
9	You foil an attempted crime onboard your ship or in your unit, such as mutiny, sabotage, smuggling or conspiracy. Gain an Enemy but also receive DM+2 to your next advancement roll.
10	You are assigned a black ops mission. Gain DM+2 to your next advancement roll.
11	Your commanding officer takes an interest in your career. Either gain Tactics 1 or DM+4 to your next advancement roll thanks to their aid.
12	You display heroism in battle. You may gain a promotion or commission automatically.

Continue

MISHAPS

1D	MISHAP
1	You are severely injured in action (this is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury table). Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury table and take the lower result.
2	A mission goes horribly wrong. You and several others are captured and mistreated by the enemy. Due to your injuries, you are discharged early. Gain your gaoler as an Enemy and reduce your STR and DEX by one because of your injuries.
3	During a battle, defeat or victory depends on your actions. You must make an 8+ check using a skill which depends on your branch. Electronics (sensors) or Pilot if you are flight, Mechanic or Vacc Suit if you are support and Gun Combat or Stealth if you are commando. If you fail, the ship suffers severe damage and you are blamed for the disaster, court-martialled and discharged. If you succeed, your efforts ensure you are honourably discharged. You still leave the career but keep your Benefit roll for this term.
4	You are blamed for an accident which causes the death of several crew members. If you were responsible, reduce your SOC by one, before being ejected from this career as your guilt drives you to exile. If you were not, then gain the officer who blamed you as an Enemy but keep your Benefit roll from this term.
5	You are tormented by or quarrel with an officer or fellow commando. Gain the character as a Rival as they drive you out of the service.
6	Injured. Roll on the Injury table.

CENTRAL SUPPLY CATALOGUE: TEZCAT

Tezcat produce a large quantity of goods, primarily for their own use, but they do manufacture goods to be traded with other species. Items like those found in the *Central Supply Catalogue* can all be found in Tezcat equivalents. Many Tezcat items are intricately decorated with delicate patterns and images, making them truly beautiful to look at. The prices of most Tezcat items can be from 10% to 100% more expensive than counterparts manufactured by other species because of the time and effort it takes create them.

Most clothing and armour made for Humaniti can fit Tezcat or require only minor alterations and will cost no more. Tezcat can also use all tools and equipment made for Humaniti with no penalties.

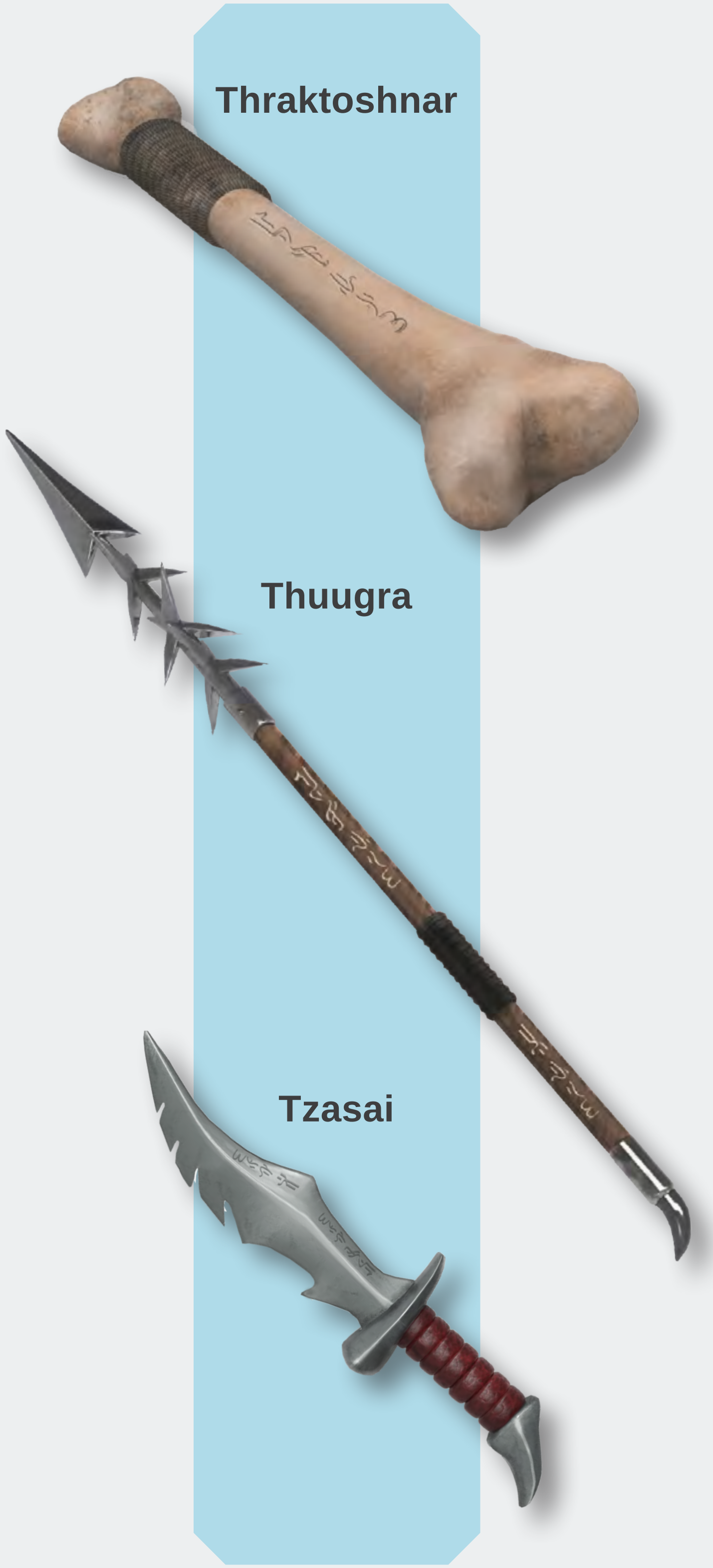
WEAPONS

During their history, Tezcat have invented and used of a bewildering number of weapons, starting from simple stone axes, arrow heads and spears, all the way up to modern slug and energy projectors. They do harbour a particular affection for more primitive weapons, the use of some still being taught in martial art schools across the Solar Hegemony.

Tezcat weapons are very often beautifully decorated with gorgeous designs and patterns. Blessings are also frequently found written in intricate script on their weapons, quoting battle verses from Shaper Doctrine.

Thraktoshnar: Originally made from the thick thighbone of an extinct Aum-rhar herbivore called a thraktosh, the thraktoshnar was the very first weapon used by proto-Tezcat. The bone was held at the knee and swung so the large ball joint at the end of the bone acted like the head of a hammer or mace. Modern thraktoshnar are artificial, made from hardwood or even metal. Bone thraktoshnar are valuable heirlooms in many Iraahr, costing thousands of Credits and having been handed down for generations to become a source of great pride.

Thuugra: A heavy fighting spear not suitable for throwing, thuugra were frequently used by Tezcat warriors in the past but are now only used in various martial art styles.



Tzasai: A traditional ceremonial duelling knife, the tzasai is carried by Shaper Partisans as a symbol of their position. The knife is wickedly curved and barbed, causing additional damage when it is pulled from a wound. The blade also carries a groove through it which can be loaded with a single dose of Tezcat venom, making them even more dangerous in combat.

Tzraa: Attached at the wrist and worn over the hand, tzraa have three long, sharp blades which can be used in close combat instead of a Tezcat's natural claws. Tzraa also double as useful climbing tools, giving those using them to climb rough or soft surfaces DM+2 to Athletics checks.

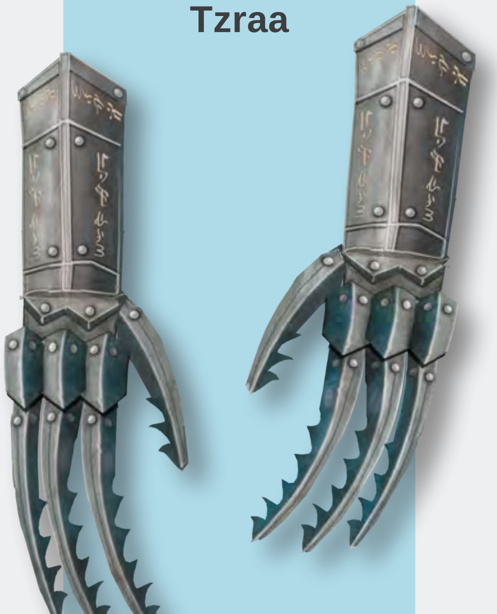
Tzreera: A saw-edged knife quite commonly used in the past but now primarily used in various martial art styles. The sharp tooth-like sawed edge cuts and tears both ways when it lands a wound.

Tzuaarra: Ancient sickle-shaped, sword-like weapons, tzuaarra were once used commonly by Tezcat warriors but are now mainly practiced in some martial art forms. The inside curve of the blade is sharply honed to inflict wicked wounds. The blades can also be used to deflect weapons or disarm a foe. When used for blocking or disarming, the tzuaarra provides DM+2.

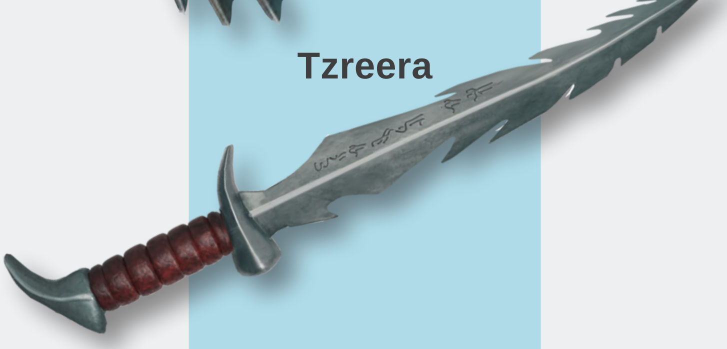
When attempting to disarm an opponent, a Traveller must declare their intent and attempt a block manoeuvre. If successful the Traveller can make an opposed Melee (blades, STR or DEX) check. If successful, they have disarmed their foe and flung the weapon several metres away equal to half the Effect of the disarm check.

Tzuaarra are always sold in pairs.

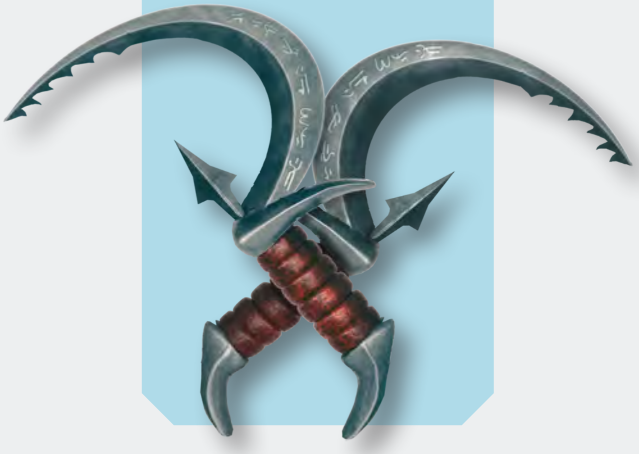
Tzraa



Tzreera



Tzuaarra



Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Kg	Cost	Traits
Tzuaarra	3	Melee	2D	1	Cr600	—
Thuugra	1	Melee	2D+1	3	Cr50	—
Tzasai	1	Melee	2D+3	0.5	Cr300	—
Tzraa	2	Melee	2D+3	1	Cr50	—
Tzreera	3	Melee	3D+2	2	Cr250	—
Tzuaarra	3	Melee	2D	1	Cr600	—

Tezcat starships tend to be fast and deadly, with even civilian craft well-armed to deal with any alien monsters they might encounter in a hostile universe. Tezcat designs are heavily based on Droyne vessels – almost organic looking with natural curves and few sharp angles – but are better armed. Unlike their Droyne counterparts, Tezcat ships are not all unique nor are they constructed from individual plans. Instead, they fall into classes of similar designs. Tezcat ships have occasionally been mistaken for Droyne, often with unfortunate consequences for those committing such an error.

Ship interiors tend to possess the large communal areas which are also found in Droyne ships but otherwise resemble those of Tezcat houses, with colourful translucent internal bulkheads of glassy amber, emerald, smoky topaz-coloured plastic and recessed amenities.

Tezcat ships do not segregate officers from the rank and file. No officer is afforded a single stateroom but must double occupy with another Tezcat which may be either another officer or a rating. Likewise, there are no separate wardrooms or mess halls. Instead, all the crew dine together equally.

All Tezcat spacecraft have a Shaper shrine on board except for fighters, cutters, shuttles and other small craft. Military spaceships are required to have at least one Shaper priest assigned to it, whose role combines the aspects of spiritual adviser and political officer. The shrines are a place for crew to meditate, seek guidance in prayer and hear sermons conducted by the Shaper priest. While only one priest is required per spaceship, often a small cadre are assigned, especially on ships of high import.

As the Solar Hegemony is in such an isolated location with few nearby stars, Tezcat have had to come up with novel methods of spreading across the stars. A common technique uses taskforces of one or more squadrons centred on broodships. The taskforce jumps into an empty hex and ships which require it are refuelled and resupplied by the broodships. The taskforce will jump again, leaving behind a broodship and its escorts to act as a remote base. The taskforce, once its mission is complete, will refuel, jump back to the remote broodship, refuel it and then the entire squadron jumps back home. On routes which see frequent travel, Tezcat have built massive deep space installations which act as waystations for the fleet.

Shaper Shrine: The presence of a Shaper shrine on Tezcat military vessels is a requirement but only optional on civilian ships, although many civilian captains will put aside space in a common area for a small shrine dedicated to the Absolute. Shipboard Shaper shrines are built to resemble the internal structure of larger temples. The walls, floor and ceiling have the appearance of basalt blocks and the ceiling is concealed by a starscape hologram. The walls contain niches where the bones of those who have died in service are respectfully kept. Six tons of space dedicated to a Shaper shrine can accommodate 12 worshippers and shrines are designed to hold the entire ship's complement. Shaper shrines are normally included as part of the common area of a ship.

Option	Worshippers	TL	Tons	Cost
Shaper Shrine	12	7	6	MCr0.4

LIGHT FIGHTER

CLASS: HRISSHTOU

Small and fast, *Hrisshtou* fighters are used to harry other ships, drawing attention away from more capable ships and giving them the chance to inflict damage. *Hrisshtou* are always assigned in groups and almost never encountered alone. Despite their fragile nature and light armament, a squadron of *Hrisshtou* can prove an effective force against the unwary.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	9 tons, Streamlined	—	0.54
	Aerofins	0.5	0.05
M-Drive	Thrust 7 (increased size)	0.75	7.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 30	2	2
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks operation	1	—
Bridge	Cockpit	1.5	0.01
Computer	Computer/20fib	—	0.01
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Fixed Mount (particle beam)	—	4.1
Systems	Fuel Scoops	—	—
Software	Intellect	—	—
	Evade/2	—	2
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		0.3	—
Total: MCr22.51			

Crew

Pilot

Hull: 3

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr1876/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr22.51

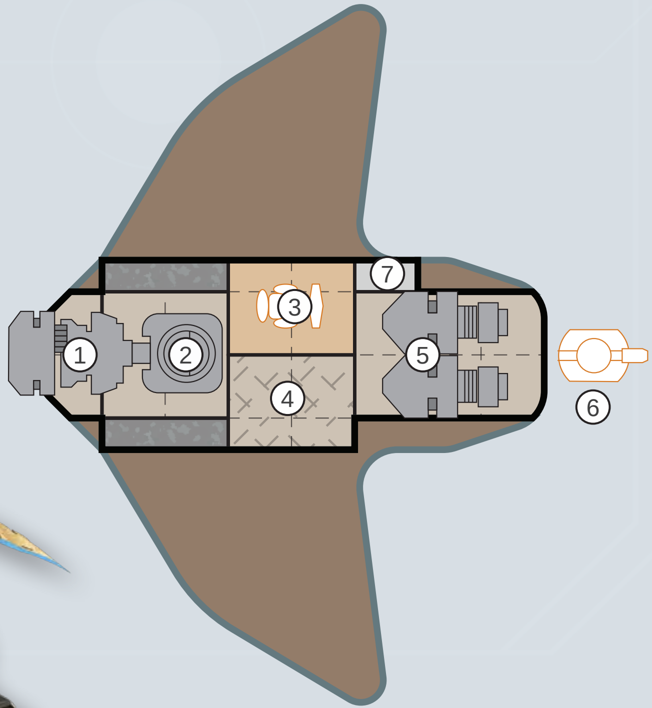
Power Requirements

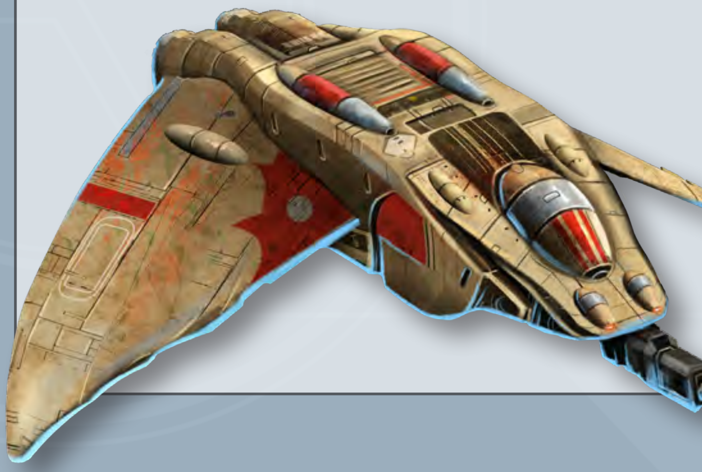
Basic Ship Systems	2
Manoeuvre Drive	7
Sensors	4
Weapons	8

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Cockpit
4. Computer
5. Sensors
6. Fixed Mount Particle Beam
7. Cargo Hold





GIG

CLASS: GSHAHK

Built on a 20-ton frame, the *Gshahk* is a swift vessel used to quickly transport crew to larger vessels. Commonly carried by spacecraft without the ability to land in an atmosphere, the *Gshahk* can see a lot of use. They can also be used as a small troop transport if necessary. Armed with a beam laser, the gig is able to defend itself to an extent but is not a fighting vessel.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	20 Tons, Streamlined	—	1.2
M-Drive	Thrust 6	1.2	2.4
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 21	1.4	1.4
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks operation	1	—
Bridge		3	0.5
Computer	Computer/5	—	0.03
Sensors	Basic	—	—
Weapons	Fixed Mount (beam laser)	—	0.6
Systems	Acceleration Seats x10 Airlock Fuel Scoops	5 4 —	0.3 0.4 —
Software	Intellect Library Manoeuvre	— — —	— — —
Cargo		4.4	—
Total: MCr6.83			

Crew

Pilot, Gunner

Hull: 8

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

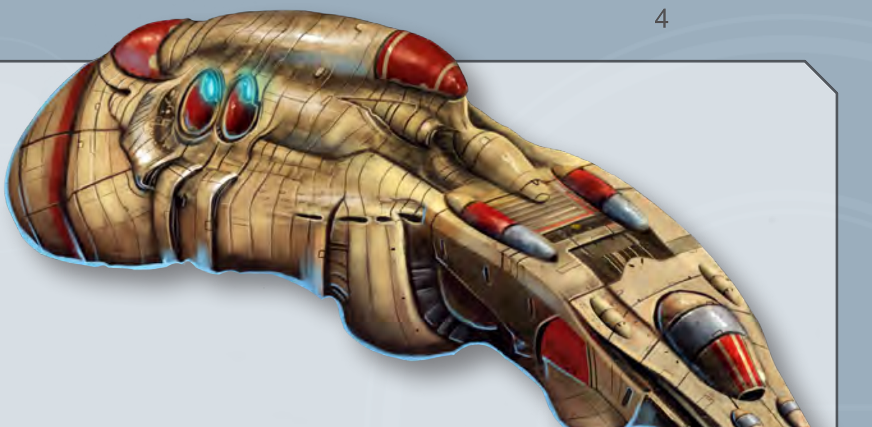
Cr569/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr6.83

Power Requirements

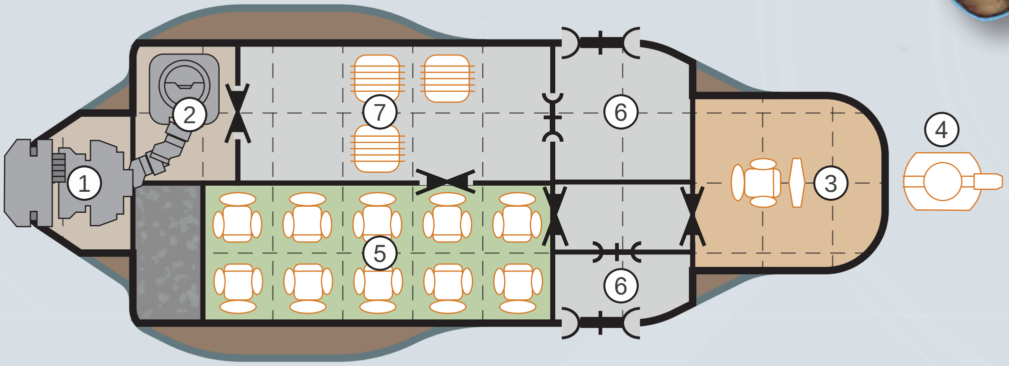
Basic Ship Systems	4
Manoeuvre Drive	12
Sensors	0
Weapons	4



1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Bridge
4. Fixed Mount Particle Beam
5. Acceleration Seats
6. Airlock
7. Cargo Hold



MEDIUM FIGHTER

CLASS: KALAHK

The *Kalahk* is a relatively reliable vessel, capable of inflicting considerable damage while being able to withstand some punishment. A basic emissions absorption grid gives the fighter a modicum of stealth but its efficiency is reduced when opposed by higher technology sensors. Currently the mainstay of the Tezcat navy, the *Kalahk* is seen almost everywhere Tezcat are, as they are used for both pirate suppression, security patrols and combat. The fighter's cargo capacity is set aside for future improvements such as technical upgrades and new technology.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	35 tons, Streamlined	—	2.1
	Stealth (basic)	0.7	1.4
	Aerofins	1.8	0.18
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 9	15.8	7.88
M-Drive	Thrust 6	2.1	4.2
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 45	3	3
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks operation	1	—
Bridge	Cockpit	1.5	0.01
Computer	Computer/20bis	—	7.5
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Fixed Mount (particle beam)	—	4.1
	Fixed Mount (missile rack)	—	0.85
Ammunition	Missile Storage (12 missiles)	1	—
Systems	Fuel Scoops	—	—
Software	Evade/1	—	1
	Fire Control/2	—	4
	Intellect	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		5.1	—
Total: MCr40.52			

Crew

Pilot

Hull: 14

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

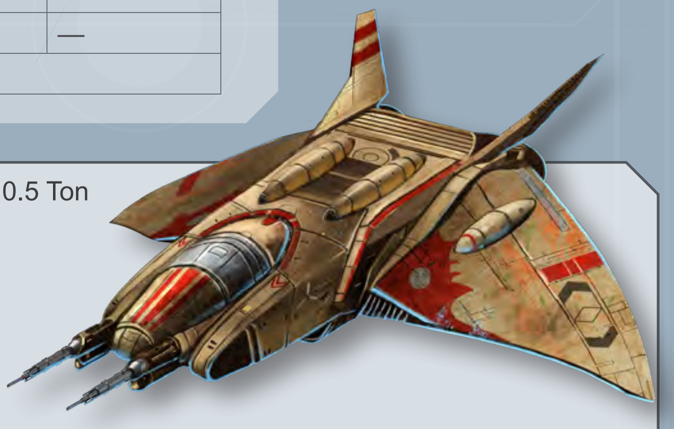
Cr3377/month

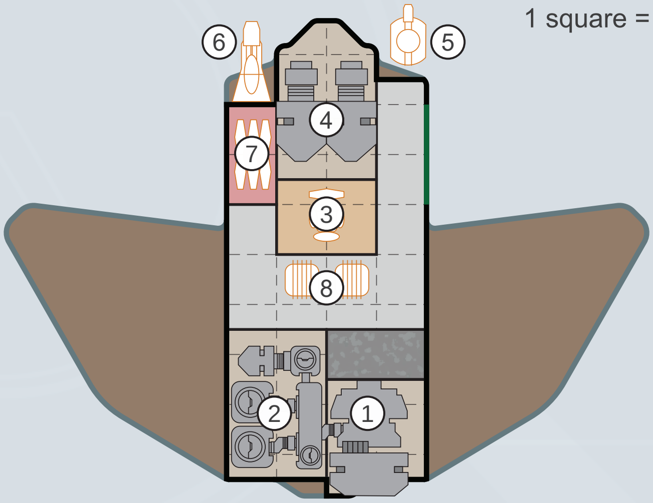
PURCHASE COST

MCr40.52

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	7
Manoeuvre Drive	21
Sensors	4
Weapons	8





1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Cockpit
4. Sensors
5. Fixed Mount Particle Beam
6. Fixed Mount Missile Rack
7. Missile Storage
8. Cargo Hold

STEALTH FIGHTER

CLASS: ASJROU

The *Asjrou* is an advanced design of the *Kalahk*, using a similar frame and load out but with greater reinforcement to the hull. The inclusion of an enhanced stealth suite has made this fighter highly successful, able to take out several other fighters its size or larger before being detected. While the *Asjrou* is highly effective, its high cost is prohibitive, so the Tezcat navy only uses them on priority missions which require a high chance of success.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	35 tons, Streamlined	—	2.1
	Reinforced Hull	—	1.05
	Stealth (enhanced)	—	17.5
	Aerofins	1.8	0.18
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 9	15.8	7.88
M-Drive	Thrust 6	2.1	4.2
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 45	3	3
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks operation	1	—
Bridge	Cockpit	1.5	0.01
Computer	Computer/20bis	—	7.5
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Fixed Mount (particle beam)	—	4.1
	Fixed Mount (missile rack)	—	0.85
Ammunition	Missile Storage (12 missiles)	1	—
Systems	Fuel Scoops	—	—
Software	Evade/1	—	1
	Fire Control/4	—	8
	Intellect	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		5	—
Total: MCr61.87			

Crew

Pilot

Hull: 15

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

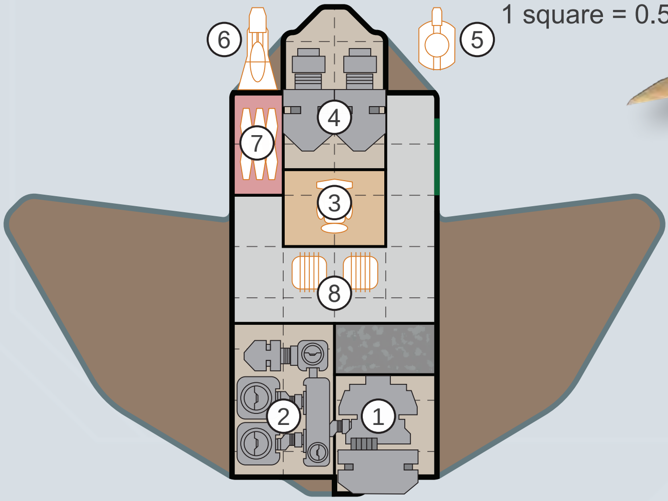
Cr5139/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr61.67

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	7
Manoeuvre Drive	21
Sensors	4
Weapons	8



LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Cockpit
4. Sensors
5. Fixed Mount Particle Beam
6. Fixed Mount Missile Rack
7. Missile Storage
8. Cargo Hold

BOARDING SKIFF

CLASS: RASHKAAHT

The *Rashkaaht* boarding skiff is intended to swiftly transport troops to enemy ships and board them, forcibly if necessary. It has enough armour to provide some protection for the maximum of 40 troops it can transport. The *Rashkaaht* is capable of defending itself to a small degree with a single beam laser turret but is normally accompanied by several fighters for additional protection.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	50 tons, Standard	—	2.5
	Reinforced Hull	—	1.25
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 4	10	5
M-Drive	Thrust 5	3	6
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 51	3.4	3.4
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks operation	1	—
Bridge		3	0.5
Computer	Computer/15bis	—	3
Sensors	Military	2	4.1
Weapons	Single Turret (beam laser)	1	1.2
Systems	Acceleration Seats x30	15	9
	Airlock	2	0.4
	Breaching Tube	3	3
	Force Linkage Apparatus (enhanced)	2	0.1
Software	Evade/1	—	1
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Intellect	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		2.6	—
Total: MCr42.45			

Crew

Pilot, Gunner

Hull: 22

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr3538/month

PURCHASE COST

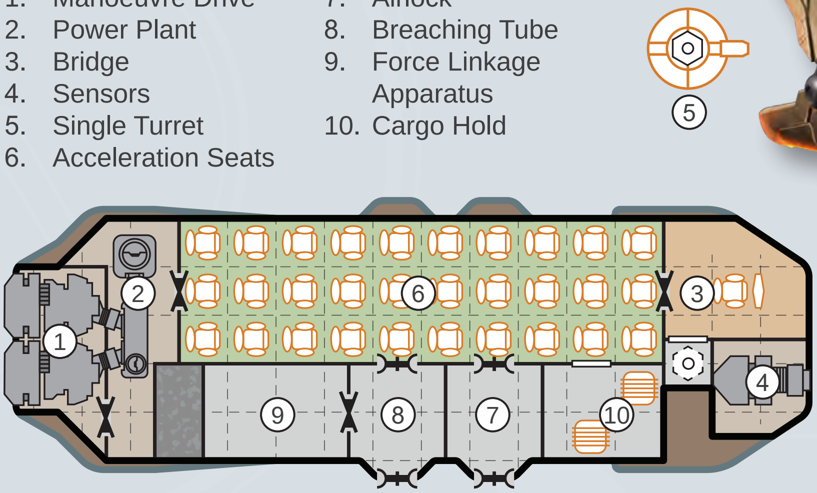
MCr42.45

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	10
Manoeuvre Drive	30
Sensors	2
Weapons	5

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Bridge
4. Sensors
5. Single Turret
6. Acceleration Seats
7. Airlock
8. Breaching Tube
9. Force Linkage Apparatus
10. Cargo Hold



1 square = 0.5 Ton

HEAVY FIGHTER

CLASS: YARLASTH

Built on a 70-ton hull, the *Yarlasth* is an imposing fighter with significant armour, a reinforced hull and a broad weapon loadout. The beam laser turret can be used either offensively or defensively while the particle beam provides an impressive punch. With an additional missile rack and a total of 36 missiles, the fighter can inflict crippling damage to larger ships.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	70 tons, Streamlined	—	4.2
	Reinforced Hull	—	2.1
	Aerofins	3.5	0.35
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 9	31.6	15.75
M-Drive	Thrust 6	4.2	8.4
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 75	5	5
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks operation	1	—
Bridge		6	0.5
Computer	Computer/20bis	—	7.5
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Single Turret (beam laser, long range, high yield)	1	0.7
	Fixed Mount (particle beam)	1	4
	Fixed Mount (missile rack)	1	0.85
Ammunition	Missile Storage (24 missiles)	2	—
Systems	Armoured Bulkheads (bridge)	0.6	1.2
	Armoured Bulkheads (manoeuvre drive)	0.4	0.84
	Armoured Bulkheads (power plant)	0.5	1
	Armoured Bulkheads (sensors)	0.3	0.6
	Fuel Scoop	—	—
Software	Evade/1	—	1
	Fire Control/2	—	4
	Intellect	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Cargo		8.9	—
Total: MCr62.29			

Crew

Pilot, Gunner

Hull: 30

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr5191/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr62.29

Power Requirements

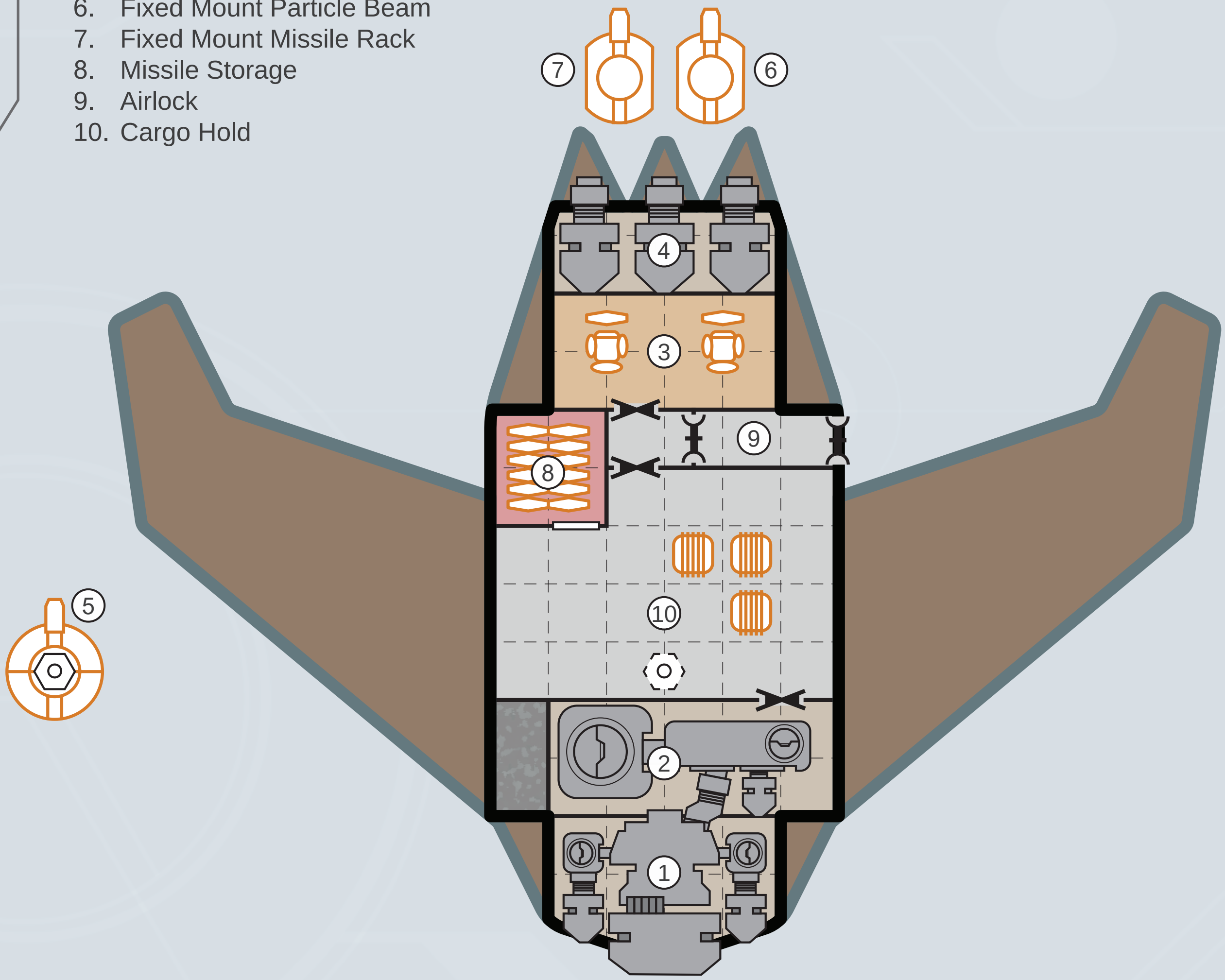
Basic Ship Systems	14
Manoeuvre Drive	42
Sensors	4
Weapons	13

Yarlasth-class Heavy Fighter

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Bridge
4. Sensors
5. Single Turret
6. Fixed Mount Particle Beam
7. Fixed Mount Missile Rack
8. Missile Storage
9. Airlock
10. Cargo Hold



GUNBOAT

CLASS: GRATHRISS

The *Grathriss* serves two roles in the Tezcat navy – as a combat ship and customs vessel. As a combat ship, several escort fighters normally accompany the gunboat to protect it from aggressors but as a customs ship, *Grathriss* normally travel in groups of two or three. The staterooms and large fuel capacity allow it to perform long patrols or remain hidden in the clouds of a gas giant while the crew wait to surprise pirates and smugglers. The particle beam barbette can inflict significant damage to targets while its heavy armour and reinforced hull serve as ample protection. Lastly, the *Grathriss* can serve as an adequate system defence boat or combat support vessel for a planet's system defence fleet.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	100 tons, Streamlined	—	6
	Reinforced Hull	—	3
	Aerofins	5	0.5
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 9	22.5	22.5
M-Drive	Thrust 6	6	12
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 105	7	7
Fuel Tanks	12 weeks operation	3	—
Bridge		10	0.5
Computer	Computer/20bis	—	7.5
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Particle Barbette	5	8
Systems	Armoured Bulkheads (bridge)	1	2
	Armoured Bulkheads (manoeuvre drive)	0.6	1.2
	Armoured Bulkheads (powerplant)	0.7	1.4
	Armoured Bulkheads (sensors)	0.3	0.6
	Fuel Scoop	—	—
Staterooms	Standard x2	8	1
Software	Evade/1	—	1
	Fire Control/2	—	4
	Intellect	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Common Areas		2	0.2
Cargo		25.9	—
Total: MCr82.7			

Crew

Pilot, Gunner

Hull: 44

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr6892/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr82.7

Power Requirements

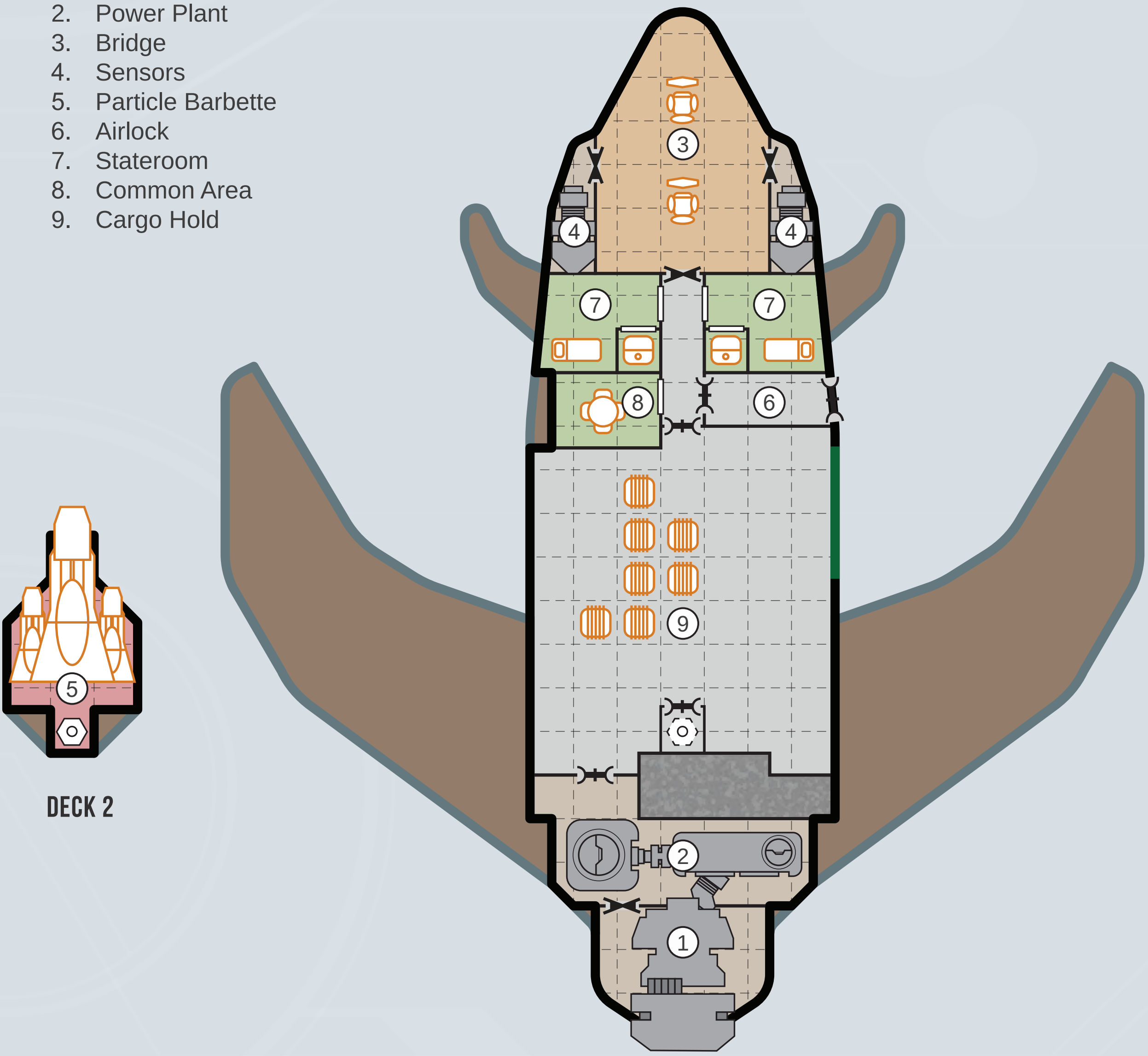
Basic Ship Systems	20
Manoeuvre Drive	60
Sensors	4
Weapons	15

Grathriss-class Gunboat

1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Bridge
4. Sensors
5. Particle Barbette
6. Airlock
7. Stateroom
8. Common Area
9. Cargo Hold



DECK 2

DECK 1

TORPEDO BOAT

CLASS: VATHA

Built on the same hull as the *Grathriss*-class gunboat, the *Vatha* replaces the particle barbette with a torpedo barbette and appropriated some of the cargo space for a torpedo magazine. A slightly cheaper vessel than its sister ship due to the altered armament, the *Vatha* has proven to be very popular despite it not being as useful in performing customs or pirate patrols. Instead, it is an effective combatant used against larger craft.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	100 tons, Streamlined	—	6
	Reinforced Hull	—	3
	Aerofins	5	0.5
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 9	22.5	22.5
M-Drive	Thrust 6	6	12
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 90	6	6
Fuel Tanks	12 weeks of operation	3	—
Bridge		10	0.5
Computer	Computer/20bis	—	7.5
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	Torpedo Barbette	5	3
Ammunition	Torpedo Storage (21 torpedoes)	6.9	—
Systems	Armoured Bulkheads (bridge)	1	2
	Armoured Bulkheads(manoeuvre drive)	0.6	1.2
	Armoured Bulkheads (powerplant)	0.7	1.4
	Armoured Bulkheads (sensors)	0.3	0.6
	Fuel Scoop	—	—
Staterooms	Standard x2	8	1
Software	Evade/1	—	1
	Fire Control/1	—	1
	Intellect	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Common Areas		2	0.2
Cargo		20	—
Total: MCr73.7			

Crew

Pilot, Gunner

Hull: 44

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr6142/month

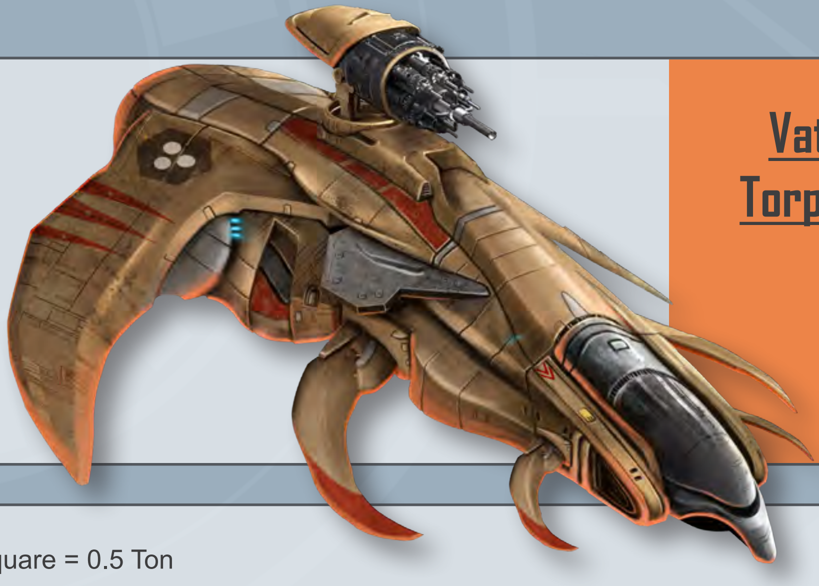
PURCHASE COST

MCr73.7

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	20
Manoeuvre Drive	60
Sensors	4
Weapons	2

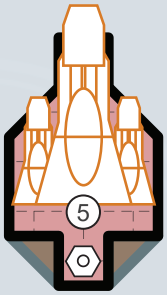
Vatha-class Torpedo Boat



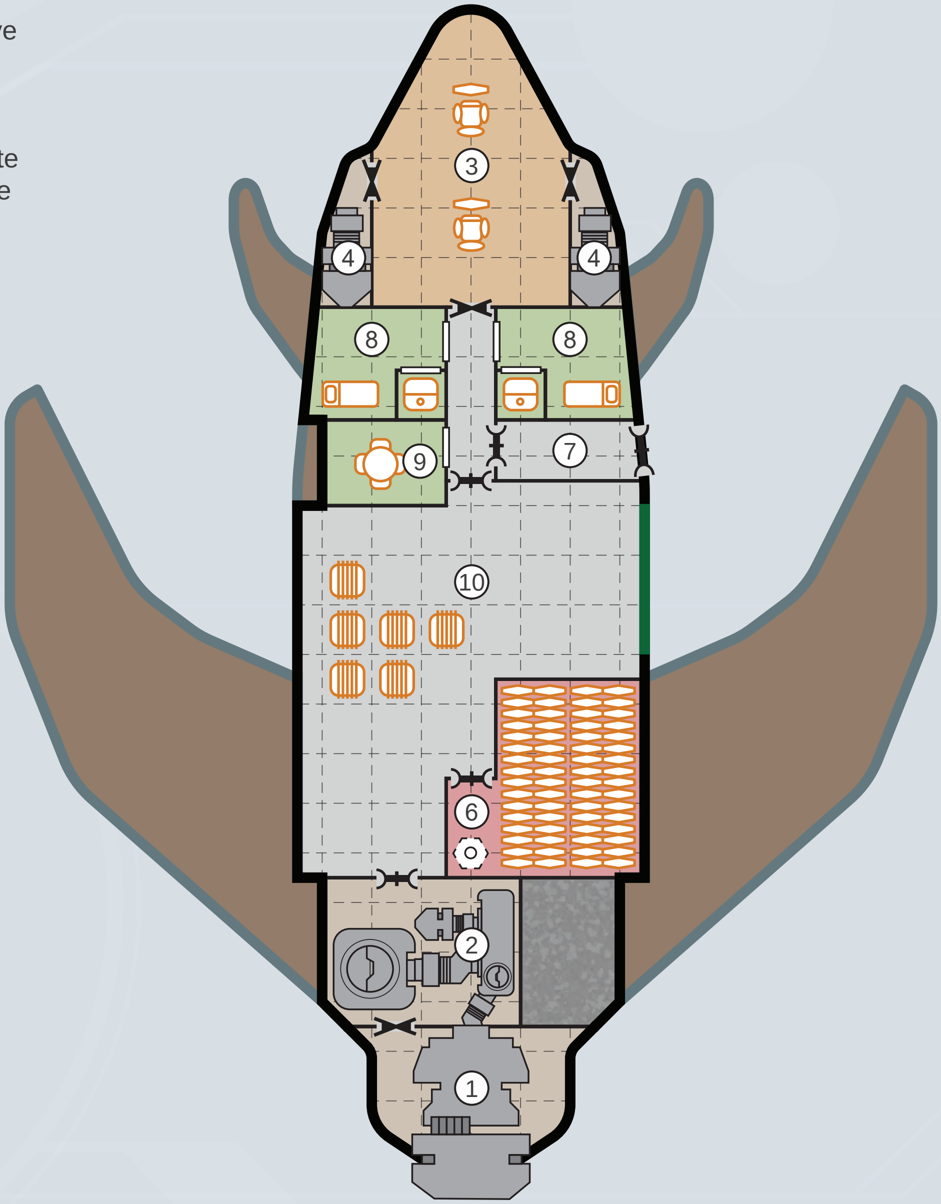
1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Bridge
4. Sensors
5. Torpedo Barbette
6. Torpedo Storage
7. Airlock
8. Stateroom
9. Common Area
10. Cargo Hold



DECK 2



DECK 1

REFUELLING SHUTTLE

CLASS: **KILRASHTA**

The *Kilrashta*-class refuelling shuttle is a common boat assigned to carriers and broodships. Its sleek triangular design allows it to smoothly dip into the atmospheres of gas giants to scoop for fuel, although it has no capacity to process it. An UNREP system allows for easy refuelling in space. The refuelling shuttle has no capacity to defend itself, so is usually accompanied by several fighters while it skims for fuel. Normally, the *Kilrashta* requires a crew of five but under normal operations it performs adequately with only a pilot and engineer aboard. Other functions requiring maintenance crew are normally performed while the shuttle is docked with its mothership.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	1,000 tons, Streamlined	—	60
	Aerofins	10	5
M-Drive	Thrust 1	10	20
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 315	21	21
Fuel Tanks	1 week operation	1.4	—
Bridge		20	5
Computer	Computer/5	—	0.03
Sensors	Basic	—	—
Systems	Fuel Scoop	—	—
	UNREP System (200 tons/hour)	10	5
Software	Intellect	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
Cargo		897	—
Total: MCr116.03			

Crew

Pilot, Engineer, Maintenance x2

Hull: 400

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr9669/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr116.03

Power Requirements

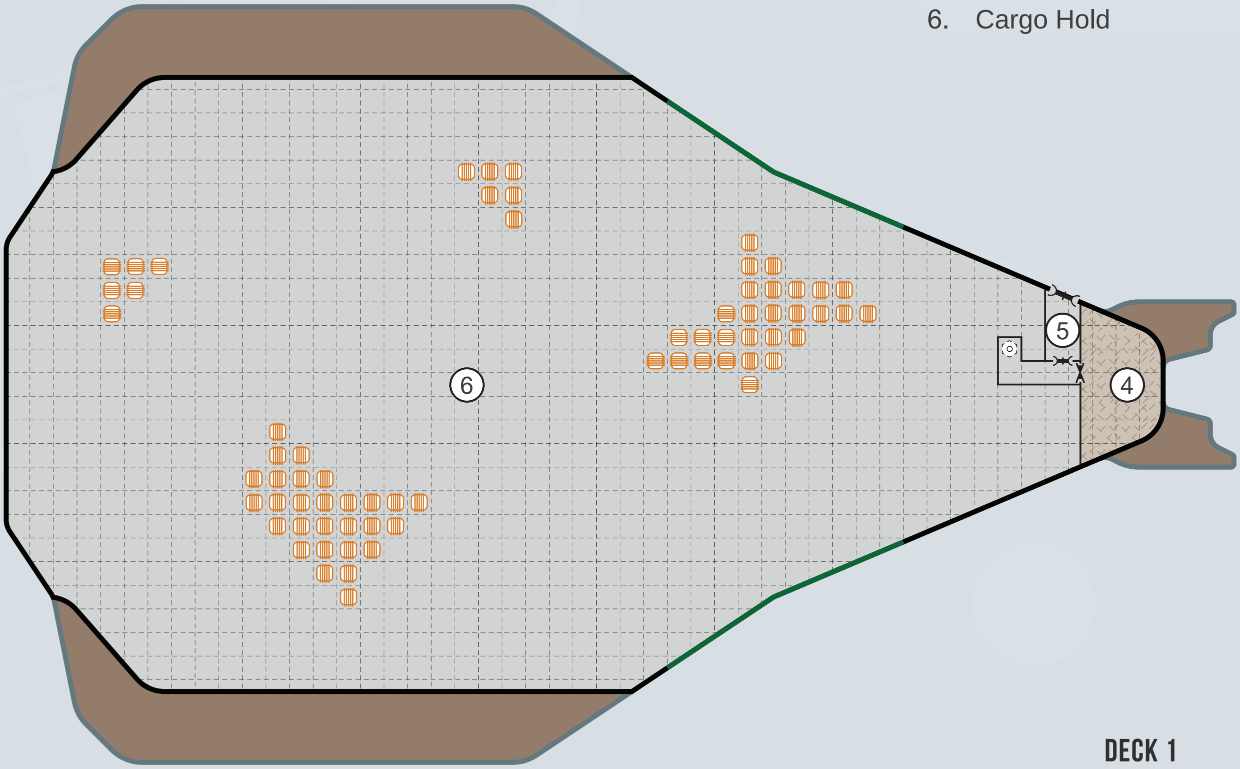
Basic Ship Systems	200
Manoeuvre Drive	100
Sensors	0

Kilrashta-class Refuelling Shuttle

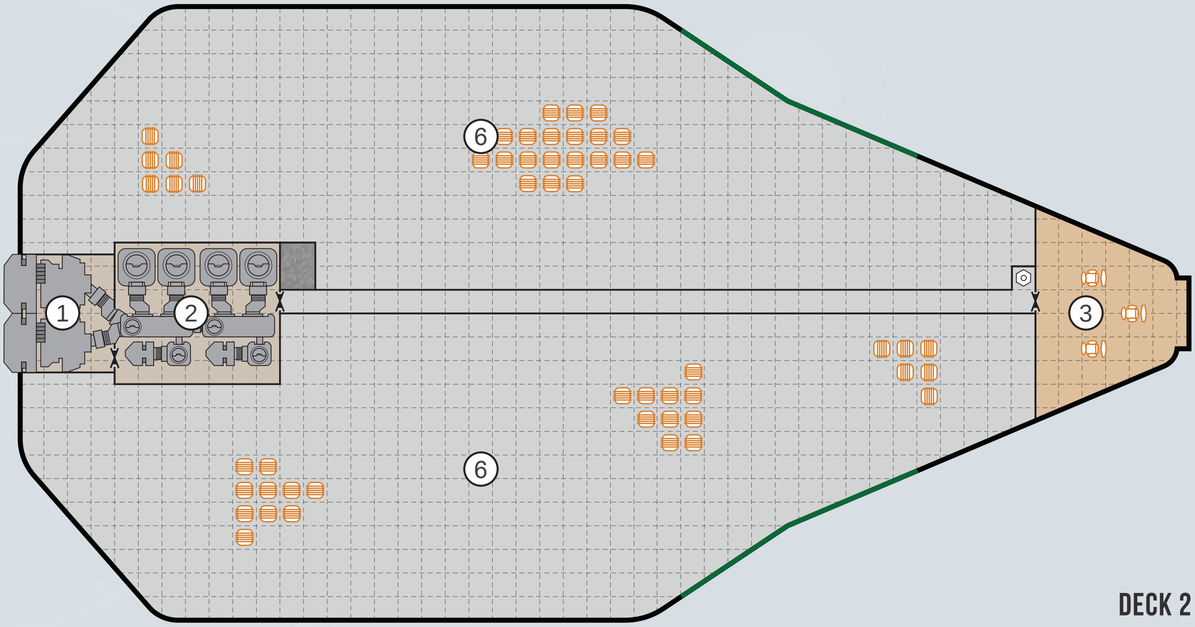
1 square = 0.5 Ton

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Bridge
4. UNREP System
5. Airlock
6. Cargo Hold



DECK 1



DECK 2

GUARDSHIP

CLASS: RALAMEKH

The *Ralamekh*-class guardship most closely resembles a destroyer from the Third Imperium Navy in functionality. Built on a 5,000-ton close hull, the class has been described as shaped like a shoe, with a rounded keel and a central spine which flares outwards at the stern. Regardless of its appearance, the *Ralamekh* performs as well as can be expected for a TL12 destroyer.

The ship's versatility is extended using drop tanks, increasing the range at which it is able to operate.

Moderately armoured and armed with several particle and missile bays, particle barbettes and laser turrets, the *Ralamekh* is a prickly fighter well suited to its purview of secondary protection of the fleet's valuable broodships and as attack ships in their own right.

Ralamekh serve a secondary function as refuelling vessels. Complemented with fuel scoops and cargo bays outfitted with collapsible fuel bladders, they can skim gas giants for fuel and transfer it to other vessels in their taskforce.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	5,000 tons, Close Structure	—	225
	Reinforced Hull	—	112
	Stealth (basic)	100	200
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 7	125	6.25
M-Drive	Thrust 2	150	300
J-Drive	Jump 3	380	570
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 4,980	332	332
Fuel Tanks	J-3, 4 weeks operation	2132	—
Bridge		60	25
Computer	Core/70bis	—	120
Sensors	Improved	3	3.3
	Sensor Stations x3	3	1.5
Weapons	Medium Particle Beam Bays x3	300	120
	Particle Beam Barbettes x10	50	80
	Small Missile Bays x6	300	30
	Triple Turrets (beam lasers) x30	30	75
Ammunition	Missile Storage (864 missiles)	71.7	—
Screens	Nuclear Dampers x4	60	60
Craft	Docking Space (50 tons)	55	12.5
	Rashkaaht Boarding Skiff	—	42.45
Systems	Armoury	14	3.5
	Drop Tank Mount	7.8	975
	Fuel Processor (3120 tons/day)	156	7.8
	Fuel Scoops	—	1
	Medical Bay	8	4
	Shaper Shrine	13	1.3

Crew

Captain, Officers x15, Pilots x4, Astrogator, Medic, Maintenance x8, Engineers x18, Administrators x4, Gunners x78, Marines x20, Shaper Priest

Hull: 2,420

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr282592/month

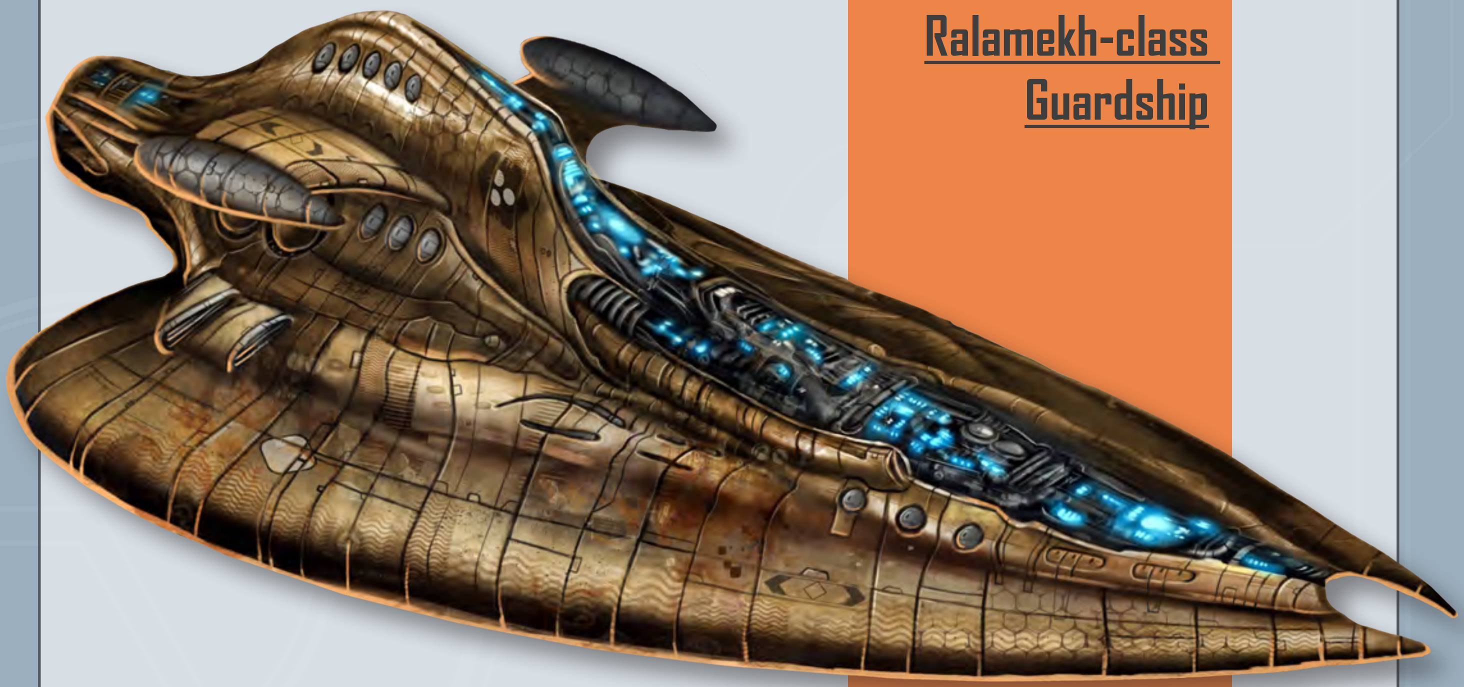
PURCHASE COST

MCr3391.1

Staterooms	Standard x77	308	38.5
Software	Advanced Fire Control/1	—	12
	Anti-Hijack/1	—	6
	Electronic Warfare/1	—	15
	Evade/1	—	1
	Intellect	—	—
	Jump Control/3	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Common Area		110	11
Cargo		213	—
Total: MCr3391.1			

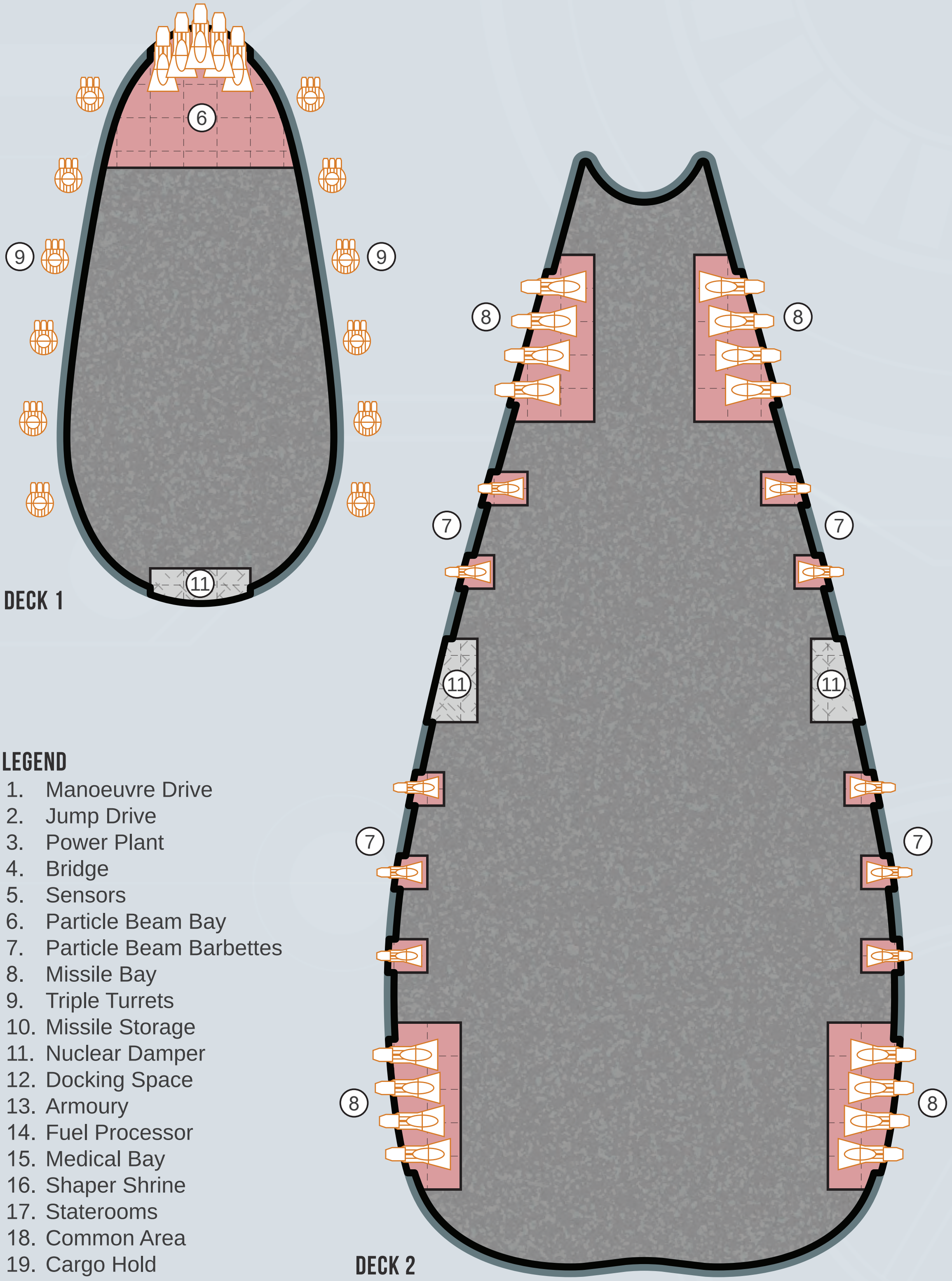
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	1,000
Manoeuvre Drive	1,500
Jump Drive	1,500
Sensors	4
Weapons	699
Screens	120
Fuel Processor	156
Medical Bays	2



Ralamekh-class Guardship

1 square = 5 Tons



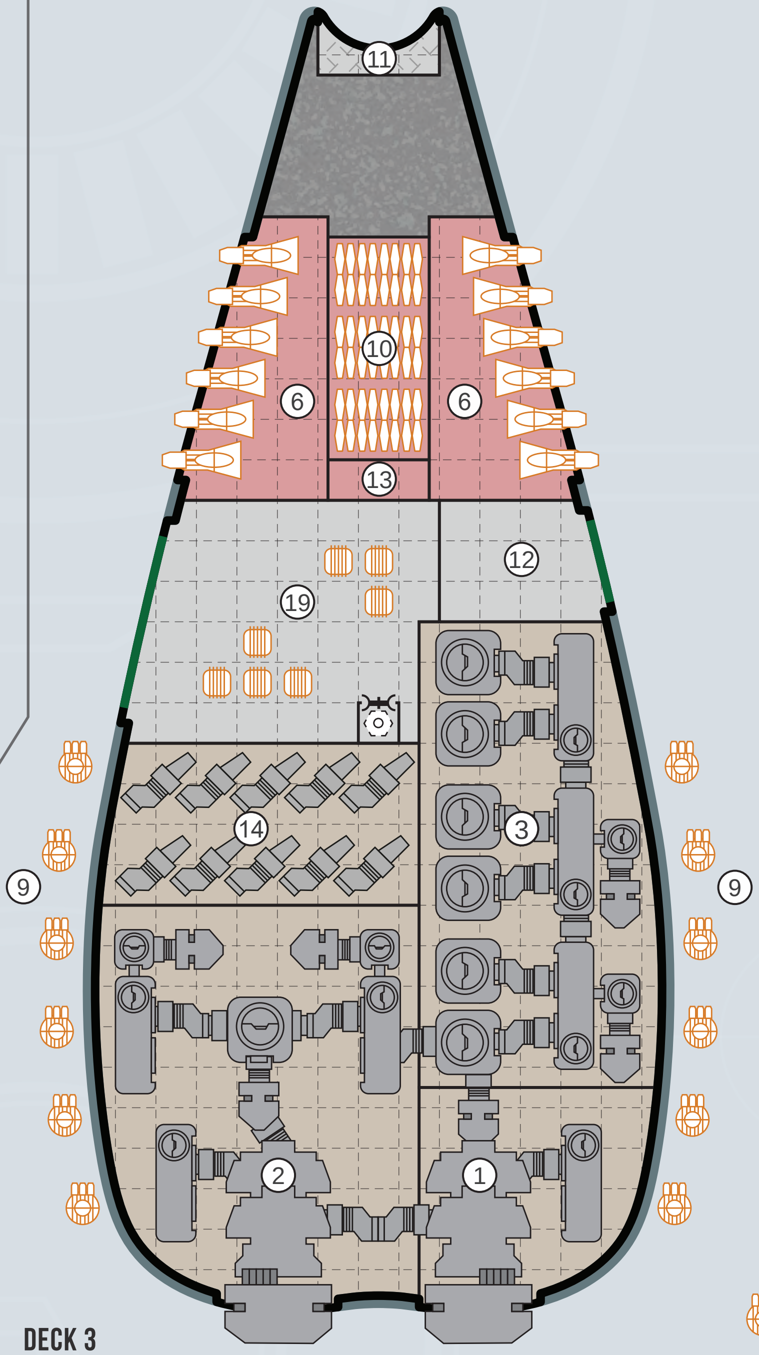
LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Particle Beam Bay
7. Particle Beam Barbettes
8. Missile Bay
9. Triple Turrets
10. Missile Storage
11. Nuclear Damper
12. Docking Space
13. Armoury
14. Fuel Processor
15. Medical Bay
16. Shaper Shrine
17. Staterooms
18. Common Area
19. Cargo Hold

1 square = 5 Tons

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Sensors
6. Particle Beam Bay
7. Particle Beam Barbettes
8. Missile Bay
9. Triple Turrets
10. Missile Storage
11. Nuclear Damper
12. Docking Space
13. Armoury
14. Fuel Processor
15. Medical Bay
16. Shaper Shrine
17. Staterooms
18. Common Area
19. Cargo Hold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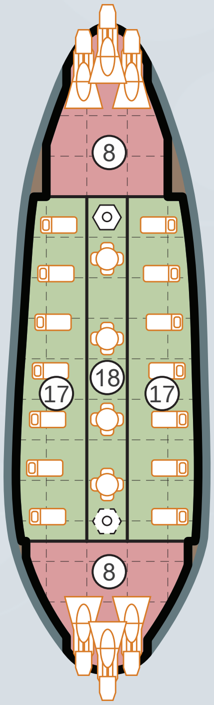
DECK 3



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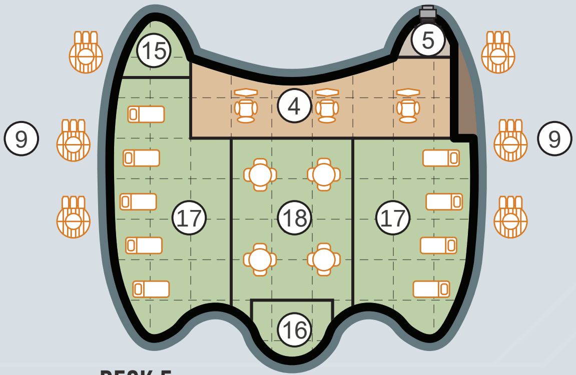
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DECK 5

LIGHT CRUISER

CLASS: FRALTHAKI

The *Fralthaki*-class is probably the most traditional-looking large ship in the Tezcat navy. Built on a 20,000-ton frame, they are roughly a flattened cone-shape which flares slightly at the stern. Despite being designated a light cruiser, the *Fralthaki* is equipped with significant armour, allowing them to withstand some punishment. Armed with a particle beam meson spinal mount, multiple particle, torpedo and missile bays, laser and sand turrets, they can give as good as they get. Capable of 3G of thrust and jump-3, they are swift as well as dangerous.

The *Fralthaki* is a much sought after berth for Tezcat spacers. Their proven combat performance and impressive lines make them a source of great pride for those who serve upon them.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	20,000 tons, Standard	—	1000
	Reinforced Hull	—	500
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 9	4,500	4500
M-Drive	Thrust 3	600	1200
J-Drive	Jump 3	1,505	2257
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 18,615	1,241	1241
Fuel Tanks	J-4, 8 weeks operation	6,249.1	—
Bridge		60	100
Computer	Core/70bis	1	120
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
	Distributed Array	6	8.6
	Sensor Stations x4	4	2
Weapons	Particle Spinal Mount	3,500	1000
	Medium Particle Beam Bays x4	400	160
	Medium Torpedo Bays x4	400	24
	Particle Barbettes x10	50	80
	Triple Turrets (beam lasers) x50	50	125
	Triple Turrets (sandcasters) x25	25	43.75
Ammunition	Torpedo Storage (100 torpedoes)	36.3	—
	Sand Canister Storage (400 canisters)	20	—
Screens	Nuclear Dampers x10	100	100
Craft	Docking Space (100 tons)	110	27.5
	Rashkaaht Boarding Skiffs x2	—	85
	Docking Space (20 tons)	22	5.5
	Gshahk Gig	—	7.83
Systems	Armoury	19	4.75
	Briefing Room	8	1
	Brig	8	0.5
	Fuel Processor (6,240 tons/day)	312	15.6
	Fuel Scoops	—	1
	Medical Bay	12	6
	Shaper Shrine	23	2.3

Crew

Captain, Officers x27, Pilots x6, Astrogator, Medics x2, Engineers x48, Maintenance x20, Administrators x10, Gunners x105, Shaper Priest

Hull: 18,615

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr1061936/month

PURCHASE COST

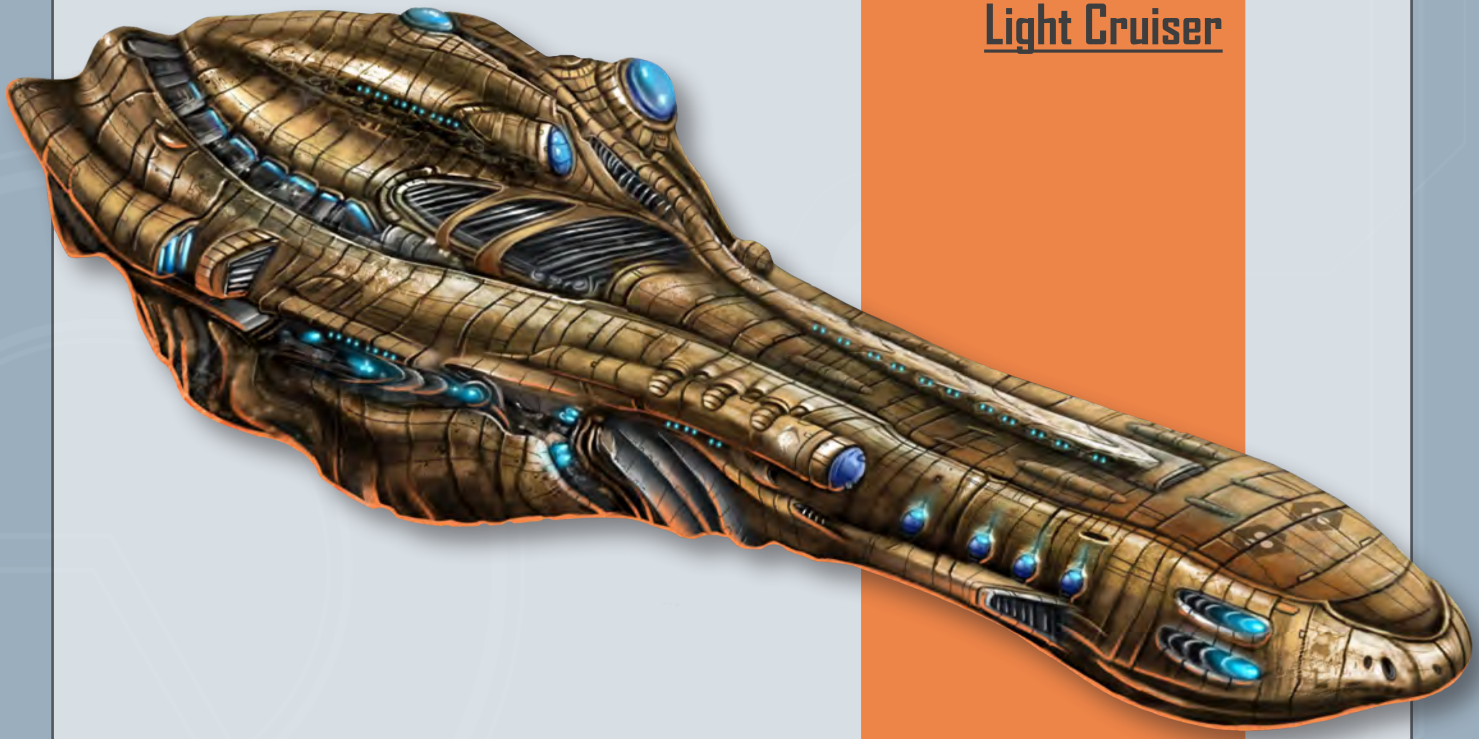
MCr12743.23

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	4,000
Manoeuvre Drive	6,000
Jump Drive	6,000
Sensors	12
Weapons	2,106
Screens	300
Fuel Processor	312
Medical Bays	3

Staterooms	Standard x137	548	68.5
Software	Advanced Fire Control/2	—	15
	Anti-Hijack/2	—	8
	Battle System/1	—	6
	Electronic Warfare/1	—	2
	Evade/2	—	15
	Intellect	—	—
	Jump Control/3	—	0.3
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Common Areas		58	5.8
Cargo		129	
Total: MCr12743.23			

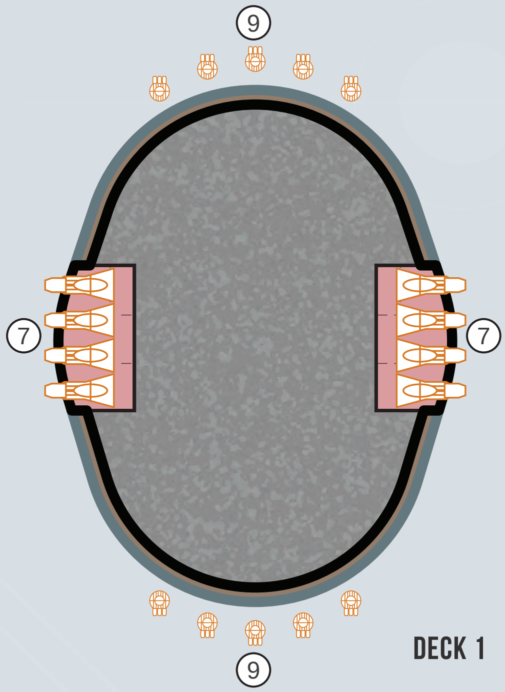
Fralthaki-class Light Cruiser



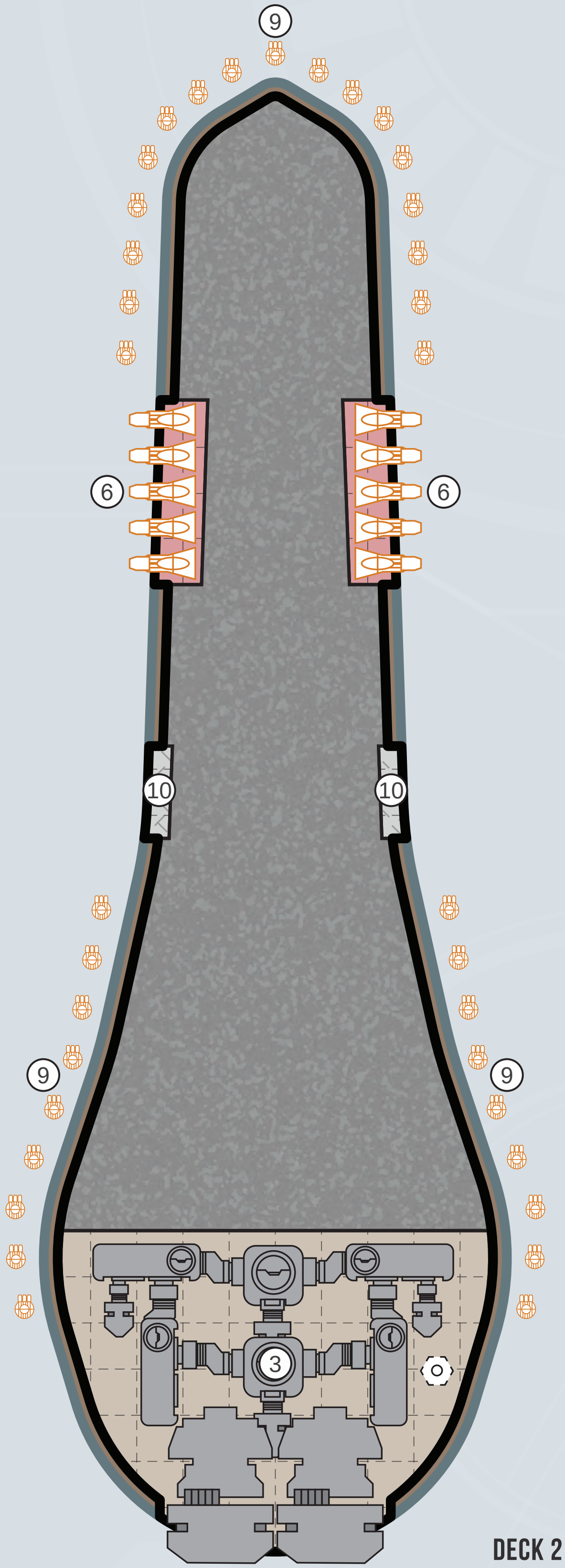
LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Particle Spinal Mount
6. Particle Beam Bay
7. Torpedo Bay
8. Particle Barbettes
9. Triple Turrets
10. Nuclear Dampers
11. Docking Space (*Rashkaaht* Boarding Skiffs)
12. Docking Space (*Gshashk* Gig)
13. Armoury, Briefing Room, Medical Bay, Shaper Shrine
14. Fuel Processor
15. Staterooms
16. Common Area
17. Cargo Hold

1 square = 25 Tons



DECK 1

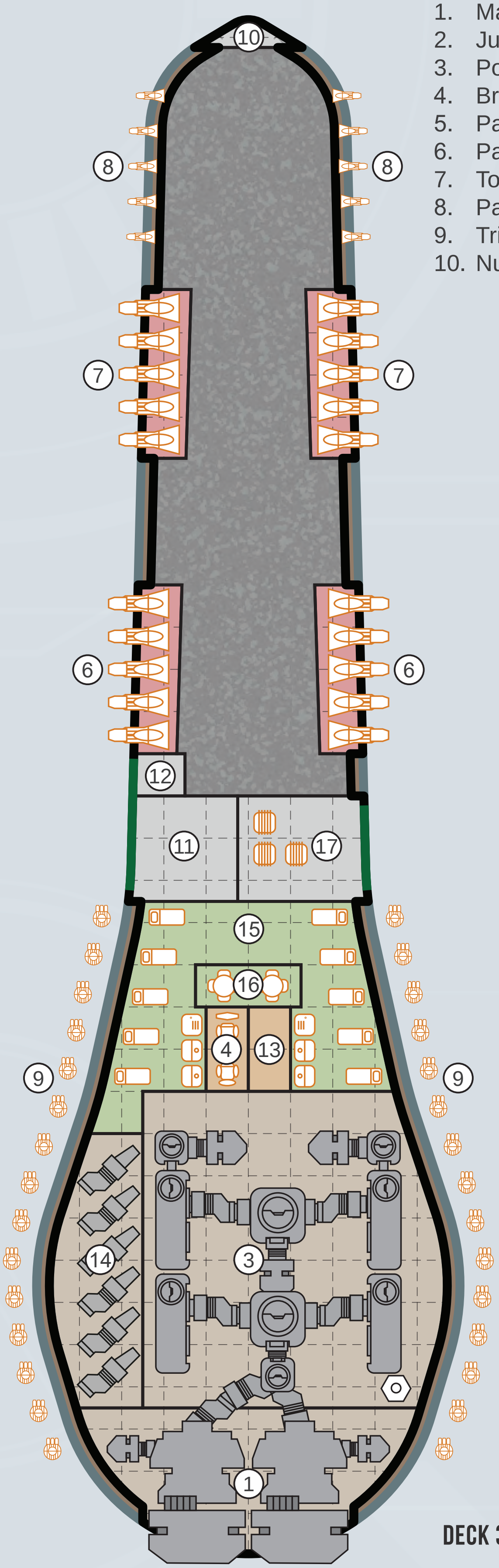


DECK 2

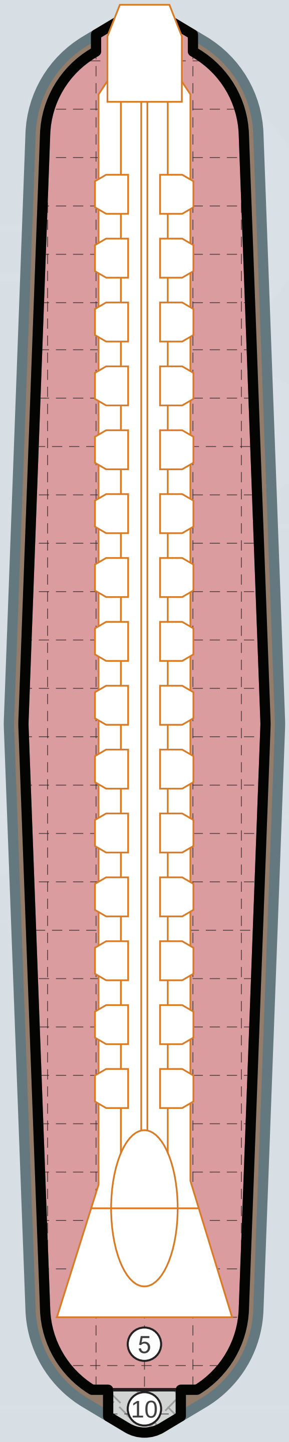
1 square = 25 Tons

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Particle Spinal Mount
6. Particle Beam Bay
7. Torpedo Bay
8. Particle Barbettes
9. Triple Turrets
10. Nuclear Dampers
11. Docking Space (*Rashkaaht* Boarding Skiffs)
12. Docking Space (*Gshashk* Gig)
13. Armoury, Briefing Room, Medical Bay, Shaper Shrine
14. Fuel Processor
15. Staterooms
16. Common Area
17. Cargo Hold



DECK 3



DECK 4

FLEET CARRIER

CLASS: BHANTHARI

The second largest class in Tezcat fleets, gigantic *Bhanthari*-class fleet carriers come in at 250,000-tons. Like broodships, they are only lightly armed and not suitable in an offensive capacity. Each ship carries an impressive standard complement of 648 subcraft of various classes and four launch tubes capable of servicing vessels up to 100-tons each. Two large recovery decks enable the rapid landing of returning fighters and a fully outfitted hanger bay allows fighters to be repaired and maintained in safety.

In addition, the *Bhanthari* can carry an enormous amount of cargo. Cargo bays are divided equally between carrying extra fuel, ship stores and spare parts for repairs and maintenance when the ship is away from port.

Bhanthari are cigar shaped with a large bulge in the centre. The thrusters are located at the rounded ends of the ship, allowing it to thrust forwards, backward and to the sides with equal efficiency. The launch tubes and hanger decks are spread across the bow of the ship while the recovery decks are located in the stern.

A standard complement of fighters includes 100 *Hrisshtou*, 300 *Kalahk*, 50 *Asjrou*, 100 *Yarlasth*, 100 *Grathriss*, 20 *Vatha*, 20 *Kilrashta*, six *Rashkaaht* and two *Gshahk*.

The construction and maintenance of the *Bhanthari* requires a huge number of resources. There are only a few in active service and great care is taken to ensure they are kept safe from danger. They are always accompanied by three guardships, even when in a safe berth.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	250,000 tons, Standard	—	12500
	Reinforced Hull	—	6250
	Stealth TL 8	5,000	10000
M-Drive	Thrust 3	7,500	15000
J-Drive	Jump 3	18,755	28132
Power Plant	Fusion TL12, Power 211,515	14,101	14101
Fuel Tanks	J-3, 8 weeks of operation	77,821	—
Bridge	Command Bridge	100	100
Computer	Core/70bis	—	120
Backup Computer	Core/40bis	—	67.5
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
	Distributed Array	6	8.6
Weapons	Triple Turrets (beam laser) x100	100	250
Screens	Nuclear Dampers x10	100	100
Craft	Docking Space (9 tons) x100	990	225
	Hrisshtou Light Fighter x100	—	3099.5
	Docking Space (20 tons) x2	40	44
	Gshahk Gigs x2	—	15.66
	Docking Space (35 tons) x350	13,475	3062
	Kalahk Medium Fighters x300	—	12453
	Asjrou Stealth Fighters x50	—	3080.5
	Docking Space (50 tons) x 6	330	75
	Rashkaaht Bording Skiff x6	—	206.1
	Docking Space (70 tons) x100	7,700	1750

Crew

Captain, Officers x187, Pilots x3, Astrogator, Medics x16, Engineers x380, Maintenance x165, Administration x83, Sensor Ops x22, Gunners x73, Stewards x4, Marines x200, Fighter Crew x738, Shaper Priest

Hull: 183,333

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

MCr11.397/month

PURCHASE COST

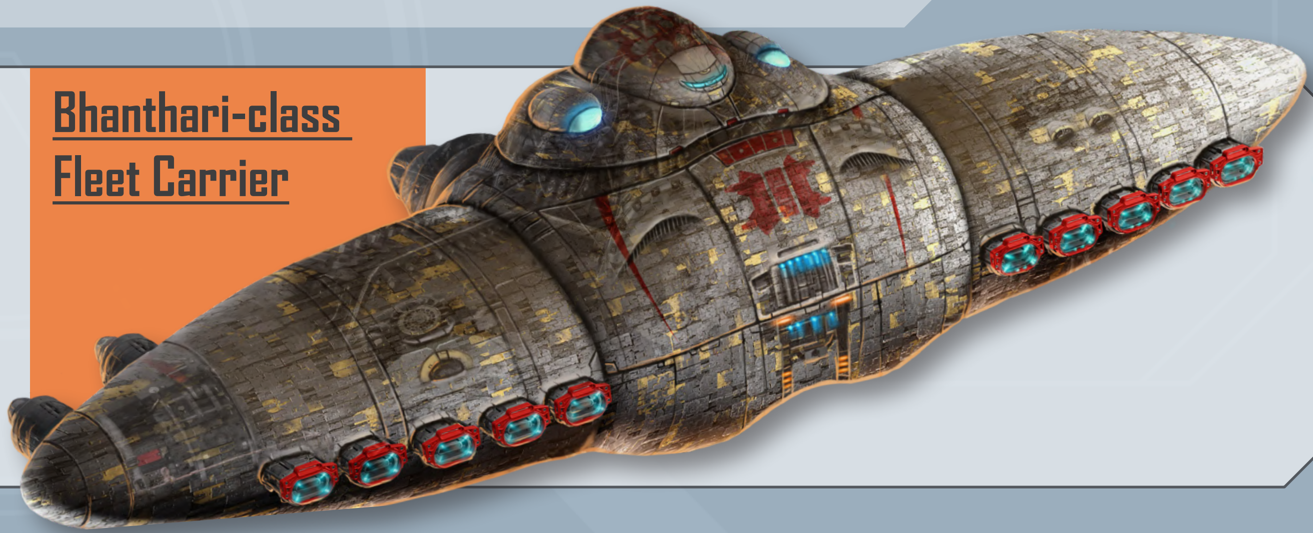
MCr136762.61

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
	Yarlasth Heavy Fighters x100	—	6351.5
	Docking Space (100 tons) x70	7,700	1750
	Grathriss Gunboats x50	—	4225
	Vatha Torpedo Boats x20	—	1520
	Docking Space (1,000 tons) x20	22,000	5000
	Kilrashta Refuelling Shuttles x10	—	2320.6
	Full Hangers (1,000 tons) x4	8,000	1600
Systems	Armoury	95	23.75
	Briefing Room x20	80	10
	Brig x10	40	2.5
	Fuel Processor (160,000 tons/day)	8,000	400
	Improved Signal Processing TL 11	1	4
	Launch Tubes (100 tons) x4	4,000	200
	Medical Bays x16	64	32
	Recovery Decks (1,000 tons) x2	4,000	2000
	Sensor Stations x11	11	5.50
	Workshops x50	300	7.50
	Shaper Shrine	628	62.8
Staterooms	Standard x937	3,748	468
Software	Advanced Fire Control/1	—	12
	Anti-Hijack/1	—	6
	Battle System/2	—	6
	Electronic Warfare/2	—	15
	Evade/2	—	2
	Intellect	—	—
	Launch Solution/3	—	16
	Jump Control/3	—	0.3
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
Common Areas		780	78
Cargo		8,527.9	—
Total: MCr136762.61			

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	50,000
Manoeuvre Drive	75,000
Jump Drive	75,000
Sensors	12
Weapons	1,300
Screens	200
Fuel Processor	8,000
Medical Bays	16

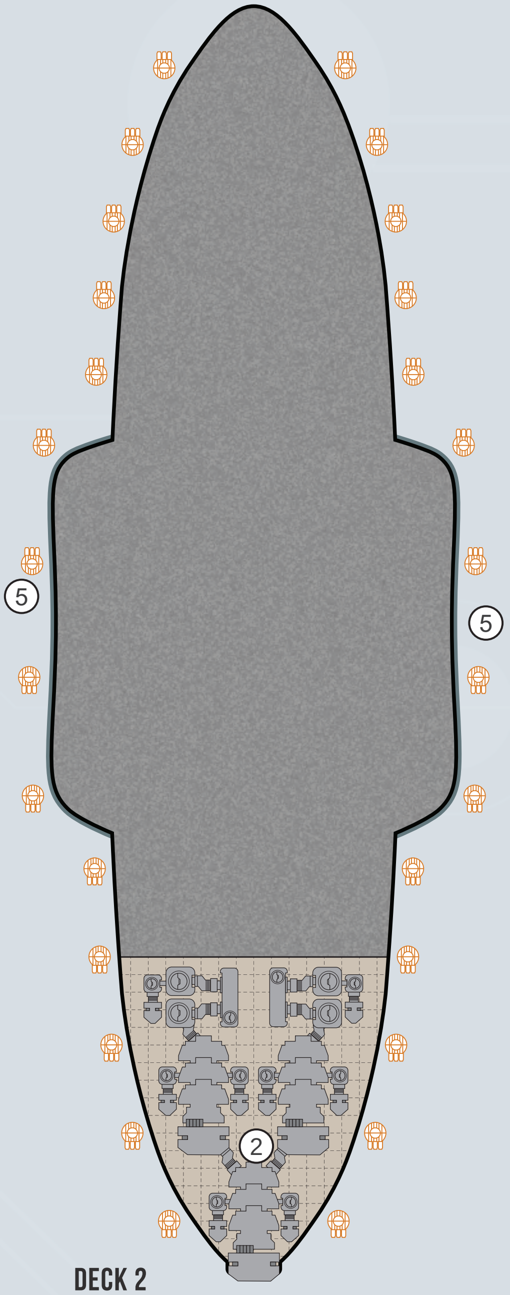
Bhanthari-class Fleet Carrier



LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Triple Turrets
6. Docking Space (*Hrisshtou* Light Fighters)
7. Docking Space (*Gshahk* Gigs)
8. Docking Space (*Kalahk* Medium Fighters, *Asjrou* Stealth Fighters)
9. Docking Space (*Rashkaaht* Boarding Skiffs)
10. Docking Space (*Yarlasth* Heavy Fighters)
11. Docking Space (*Grathriss* Gunboats, *Vatha* Torpedo Boats)
12. Docking Space (*Kilrashta* Refuelling Shuttles)
13. Full Hangers
14. Armoury
15. Briefing Rooms
16. Brigs
17. Fuel Processor
18. Launch Tubes
19. Medical Bays
20. Recovery Decks
21. Workshops
22. Shaper Shrine
23. Staterooms
24. Common Area
25. Cargo Hold

DECK 1: FUEL, TRIPLE TURRETS ONLY



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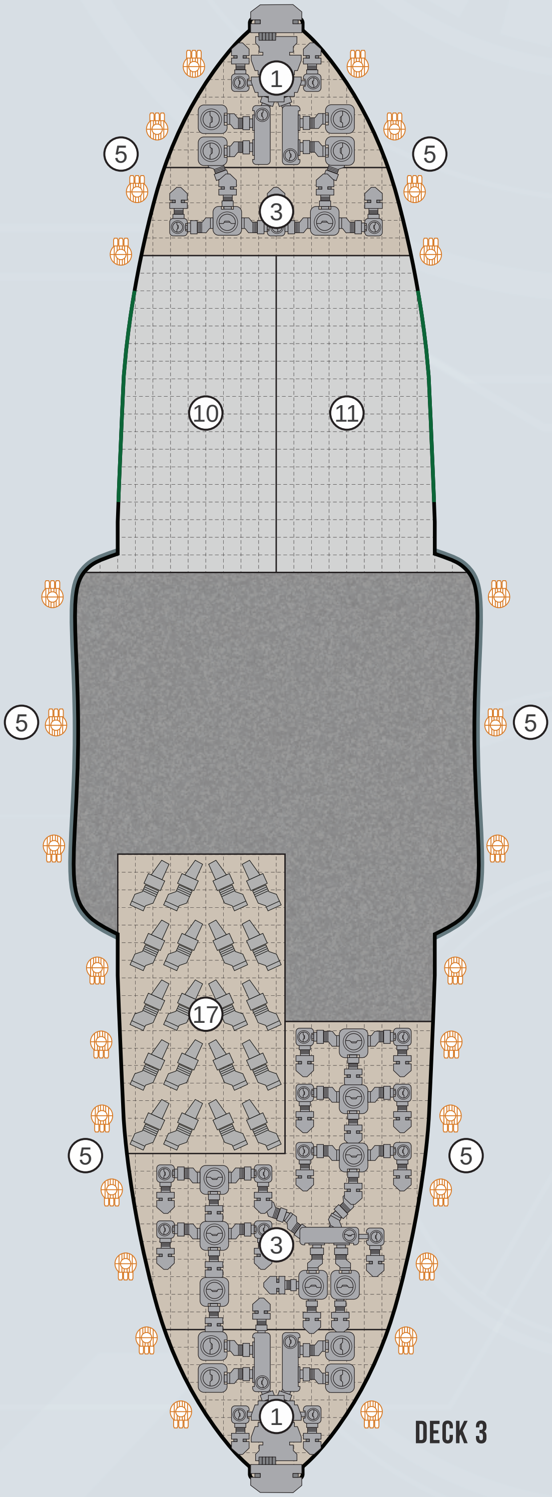
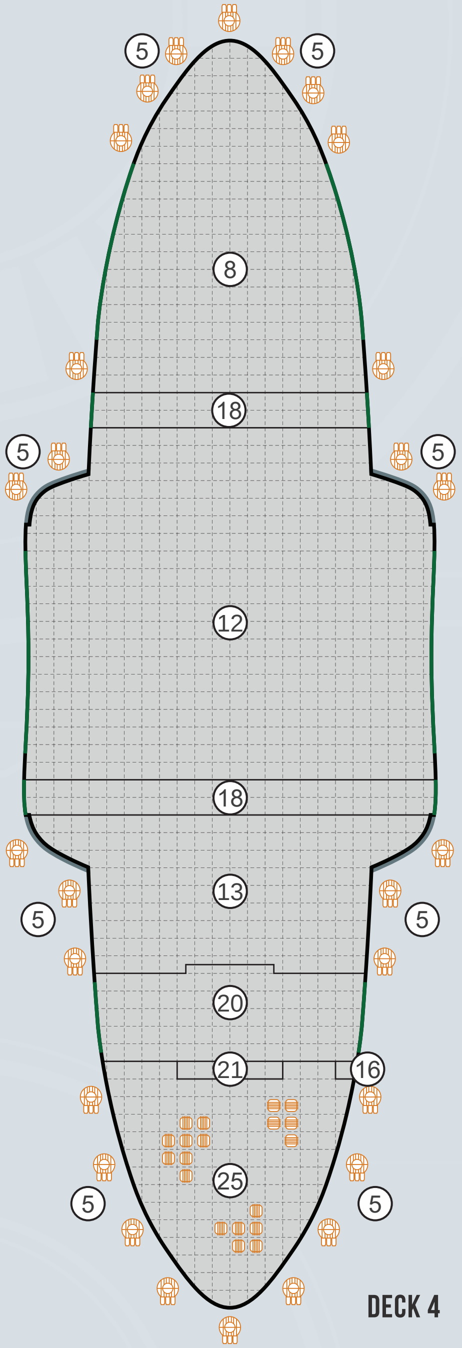


DECK 3

1 square = 50 Tons

1 square = 50 Tons



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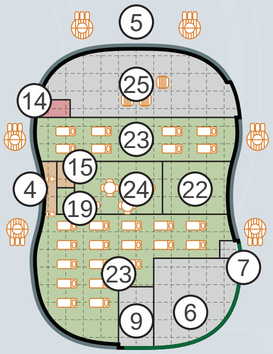


DECK 5

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Triple Turrets
6. Docking Space (*Hrisshtou* Light Fighters)
7. Docking Space (*Gshahk* Gigs)
8. Docking Space (*Kalahk* Medium Fighters, *Asjrou* Stealth Fighters)
9. Docking Space (*Rashkaaht* Boarding Skiffs)
10. Docking Space (*Yarlasth* Heavy Fighters)
11. Docking Space (*Grathriss* Gunboats, *Vatha* Torpedo Boats)
12. Docking Space (*Kilrashta* Refuelling Shuttles)
13. Full Hangers
14. Armoury
15. Briefing Rooms
16. Brigs
17. Fuel Processor
18. Launch Tubes
19. Medical Bays
20. Recovery Decks
21. Workshops
22. Shaper Shrine
23. Staterooms
24. Common Area
25. Cargo Hold

BROODSHIP

CLASS: SNAVRARH

Snavrarh broodships are both the backbone and largest vessels in Tezcat fleets. They are designed as combined fuel tanker, supply ship, mobile workshop and command centre. They are a mobile base, headquarters and source of supply for crossing the vast expanses of the Rift, which often requires multiple jumps into empty space to succeed.

The cargo holds on this class are used for two different purposes. The largest hold can carry an additional 76,288 tons of fuel, while the remaining cargo holds are divided between storing spare parts, rations, spare parts and other stores. Additionally, all the fuel shuttles aboard routinely have full fuel holds so they can quickly refuel other ships as necessary. If the captain of a broodship is willing to also give up the fuel for a second jump, it can supply a total of 239,030 tons of fuel.

These enormous 500,000-ton ships are built around an oval-shaped central hull. On the port and starboard sides are towers from which four ships can refuel. A large hanger bay allows smaller ships to berth for repairs and resupply. A large command bridge gives flag officers the ability to control entire taskforces with ease.

Snavrarh are poorly armed and only have the capacity to defend themselves to a small degree. A lone *Snavrarh* makes a tempting target for enemies hoping to cripple an invading Tezcat fleet. To counter potential threats, the *Snavrarh*-class uses stealth technology to make it difficult to locate and is always accompanied by at least three guardships to counter any upstart attempts by enemies.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	500,000 tons, Close Structure	—	22500
	Stealth (improved)	—	50000
M-Drive	Thrust 1	5,000	10000
J-Drive	Jump 3	37,505	56257.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 311,085	20,739	20739
Fuel Tanks	J-3 x3, 24 weeks operation	316,591	—
Bridge	Command	180	3750
Computer	Core/70bis	—	120
Backup Computer	Core/60bis	—	112.5
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
	Distributed Array	6	8.6
Weapons	Triple Turrets (beam lasers) x200	200	500
Screens	Nuclear Dampers x10	100	100
Craft	Docking Spaces (1,000 tons) x5	5,500	1250
	Kilrashta Refuelling Shuttles x5	—	585.15
	Docking Spaces (95 tons) x2	209	47.5
	Passenger Shuttles x2	—	28.61
	Docking Space (20 tons)	22	5
	Gshahk Gig	—	7.83

Crew

Captain, Officers x151, Pilots x3, Astrogator, Medics x12, Engineers x596, Maintenance x330, Administrators x165, Sensops x22, Gunners x132, Marines x100, Boat Crew x15, Shaper Priest

Hull: 366,666

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

MCr13.91/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr166931.99

Systems	Fuel Processor (16,076 tons/day)	8,038	401.9
	Fuel Scoops	—	1
	Medical Bays x6	24	12
	UNREP System (200 tons/hour) x4	40	20
	Workshops x50	300	7.5
	Shaper Shrine	128	12.8
Staterooms	Standard x765	3,060	382.5
Software	Advanced Fire Control/2	—	15
	Anti-Hijack/2	—	8
	Battle System/2	—	8
	Electronic Warfare/1	—	15
	Evade/2	—	2
	Intellect	—	—
	Jump Control/3	—	0.3
	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre	—	—
Common Areas		300	30
Cargo		102,000	—
Total: MCr166931.99			

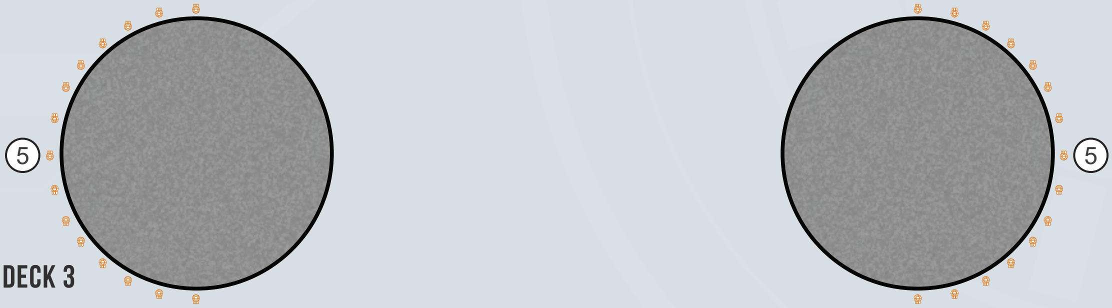
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	100,000
Manoeuvre Drive	50,000
Jump Drive	150,000
Sensors	12
Weapons	2,800
Fuel Processor	8,038
Medical Bays	6

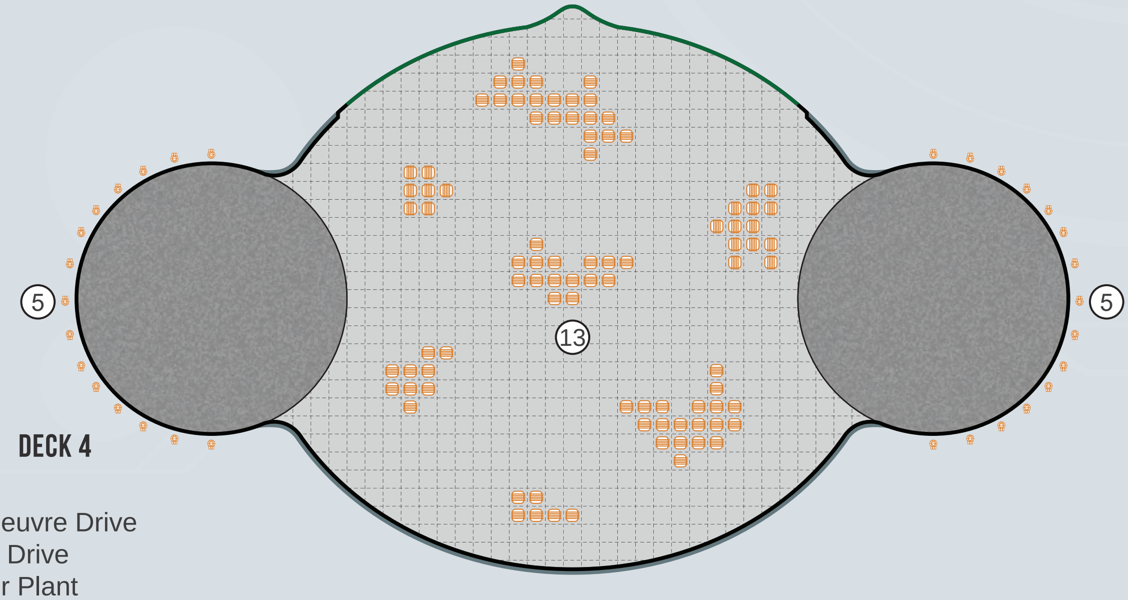
Snavrarh-class Broodship

DECK 1 AND 2: FUEL ONLY

1 square = 100 Tons



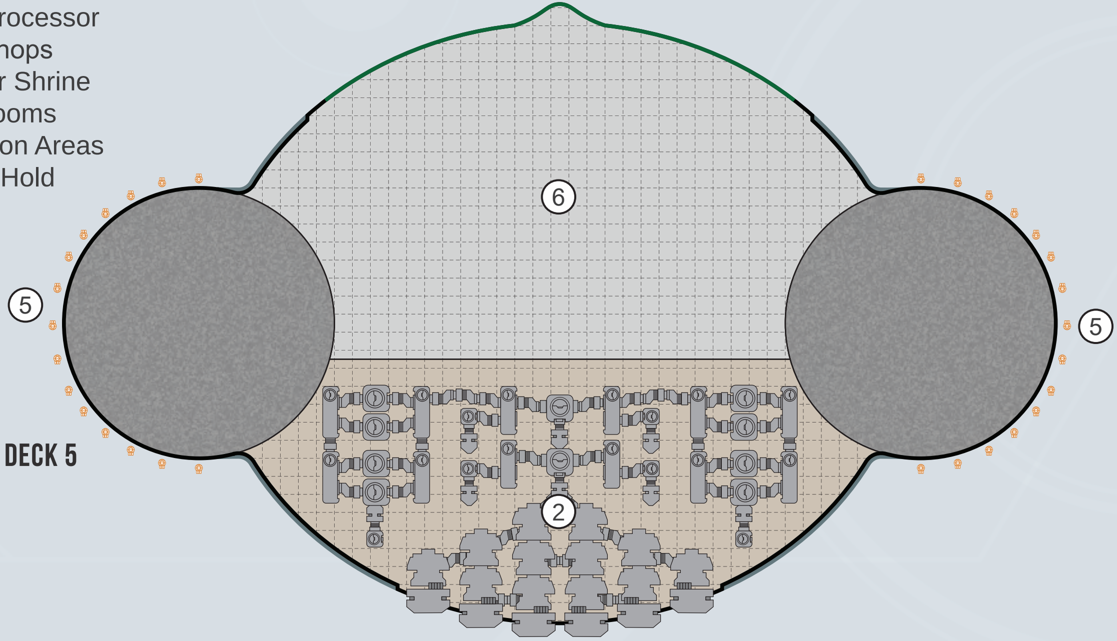
DECK 3



DECK 4

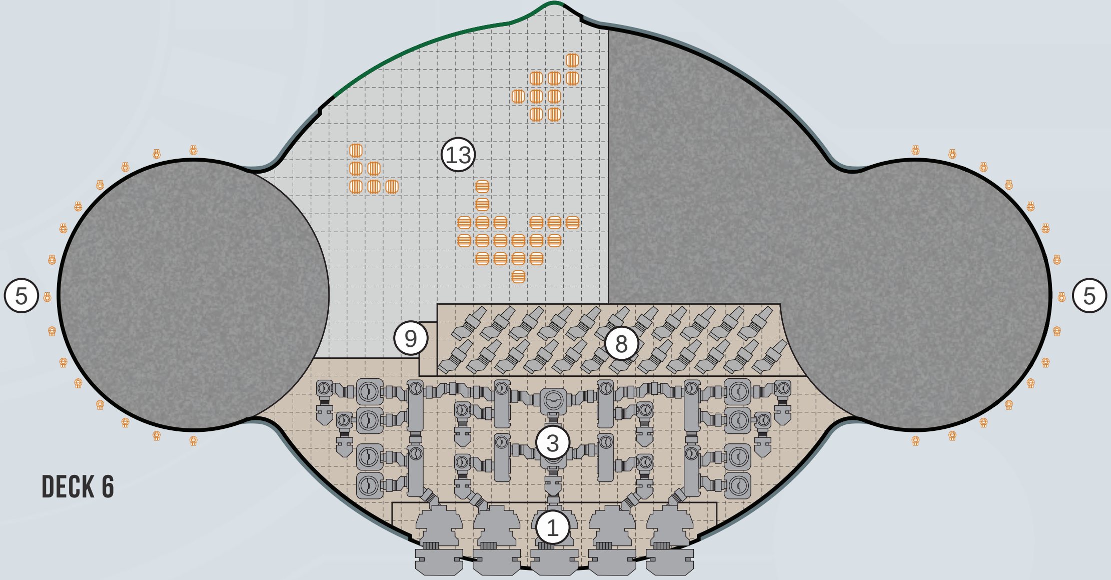
LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Triple Turrets
6. Docking Space (*Kilrashta* Refuelling Shuttles)
7. Docking Space (Passenger Shuttles)
8. Fuel Processor
9. Workshops
10. Shaper Shrine
11. Staterooms
12. Common Areas
13. Cargo Hold

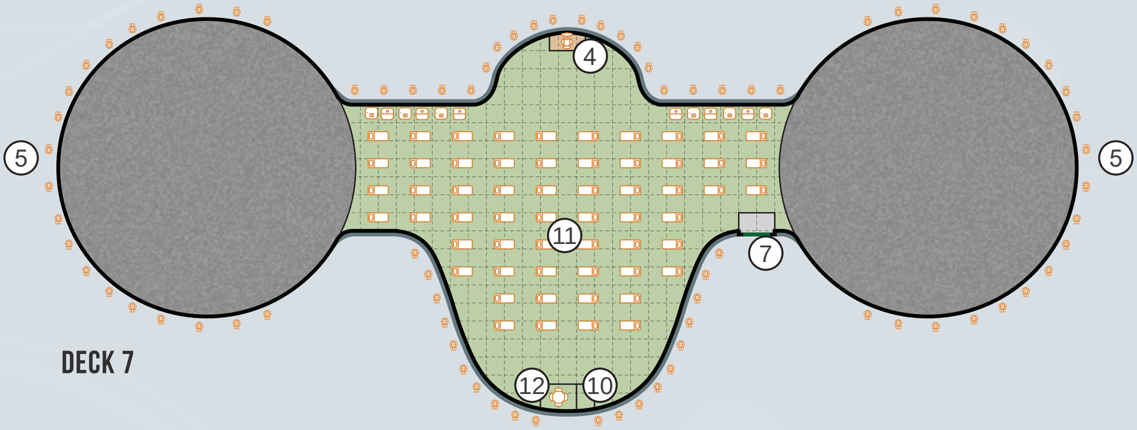


DECK 5

1 square = 100 Tons



DECK 6



DECK 7

DECK 8: FUEL ONLY

DECK 9: FUEL ONLY

LEGEND

1. Manoeuvre Drive
2. Jump Drive
3. Power Plant
4. Bridge
5. Triple Turrets
6. Docking Space (*Kilrashta* Refuelling Shuttles)
7. Docking Space (Passenger Shuttles)
8. Fuel Processor
9. Workshops
10. Shaper Shrine
11. Staterooms
12. Common Areas
13. Cargo Hold

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TRAVELLER®

ALIENS OF CHARTED SPACE: VOLUME 4

Aliens of Charted Space: Volume Four explores four species within Charted Space – the nature-loving Suerrat, the pacifistic Za'tachk, the mercantile Gurvin, and the xenophobic Tezcat. Within these covers, you will discover the culture and society of these species as well as their physiology, psychology and societies.

Suerrat
The Suerrat are a human subspecies transplanted from Terra to Ilelish by the Ancients. They claim to be a Major Race, as they independently developed interstellar travel based on generation ships but as they had not developed jump technology, others do not accept their claim.

Za'tachk
One of the oldest species associated with the Hive Federation, the Za'tachk are a peaceful (some would say cowardly) species. Their natural tendency to structure and organisation have made them invaluable to the Hivers in running the vast bureaucratic machine required for their federation.

Gurvin
The Gurvin are a hexapodal species resembling Terran otters and minks. They were the first sophonts encountered by early Hiver explorers, and their language was adopted as the primary form of communication in the federation. Consummate traders and merchants, the Gurvin are the commercial backbone of the Hive Federation.

Tezcat
A cat-like semi-humanoid species, the Tezcat are violent and warlike, with a xenophobic hatred for any sophont that does not resemble themselves. Much of their history has been marred with war and bloodshed, but through the unification of the Shaper Church, they have established a pocket empire and proven to their neighbours that they are too dangerous to cross.

This book also contains rules for creating Travellers from each species, along with *High Guard* and *Central Supply Catalogue* entries.

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